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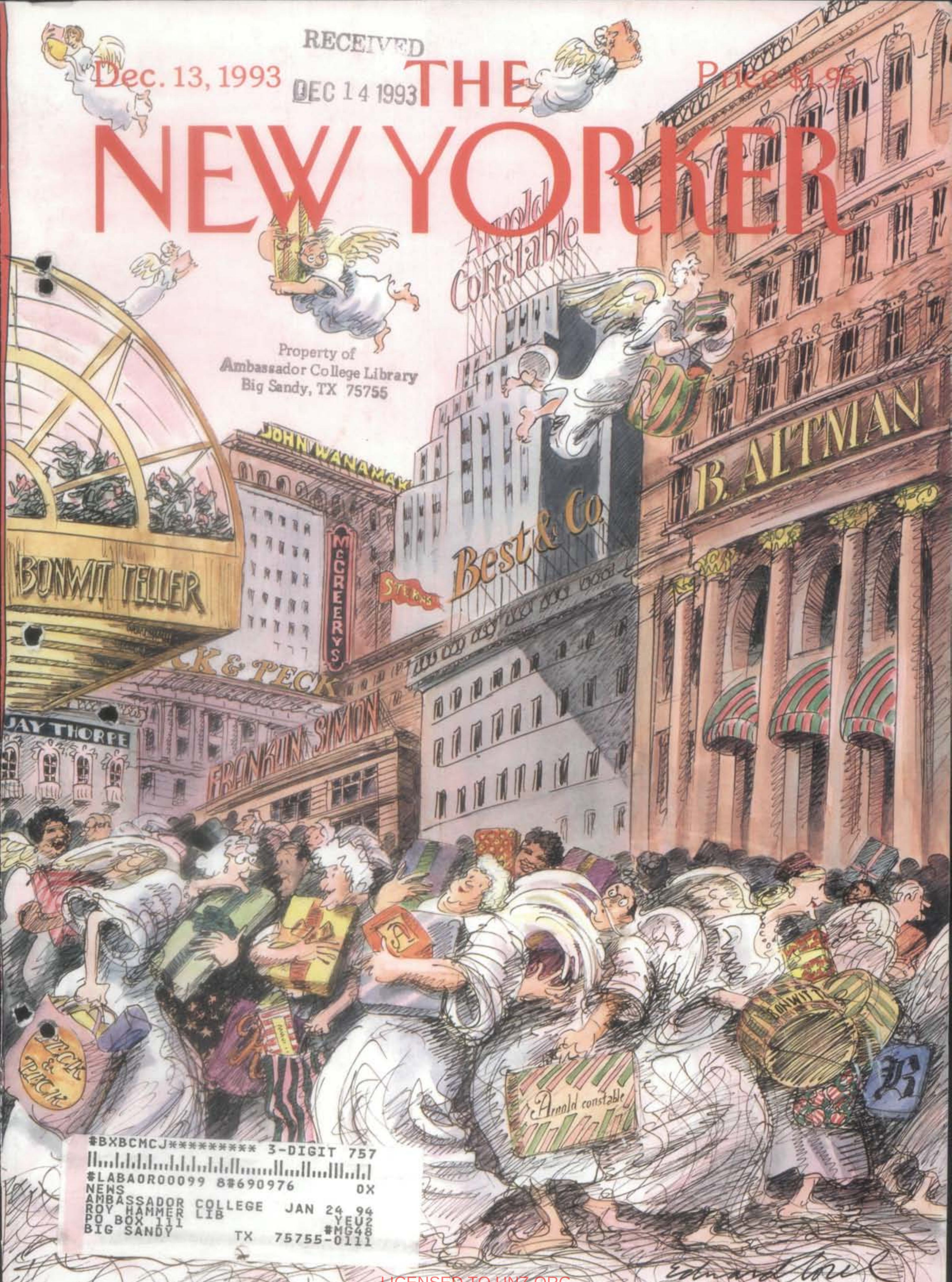
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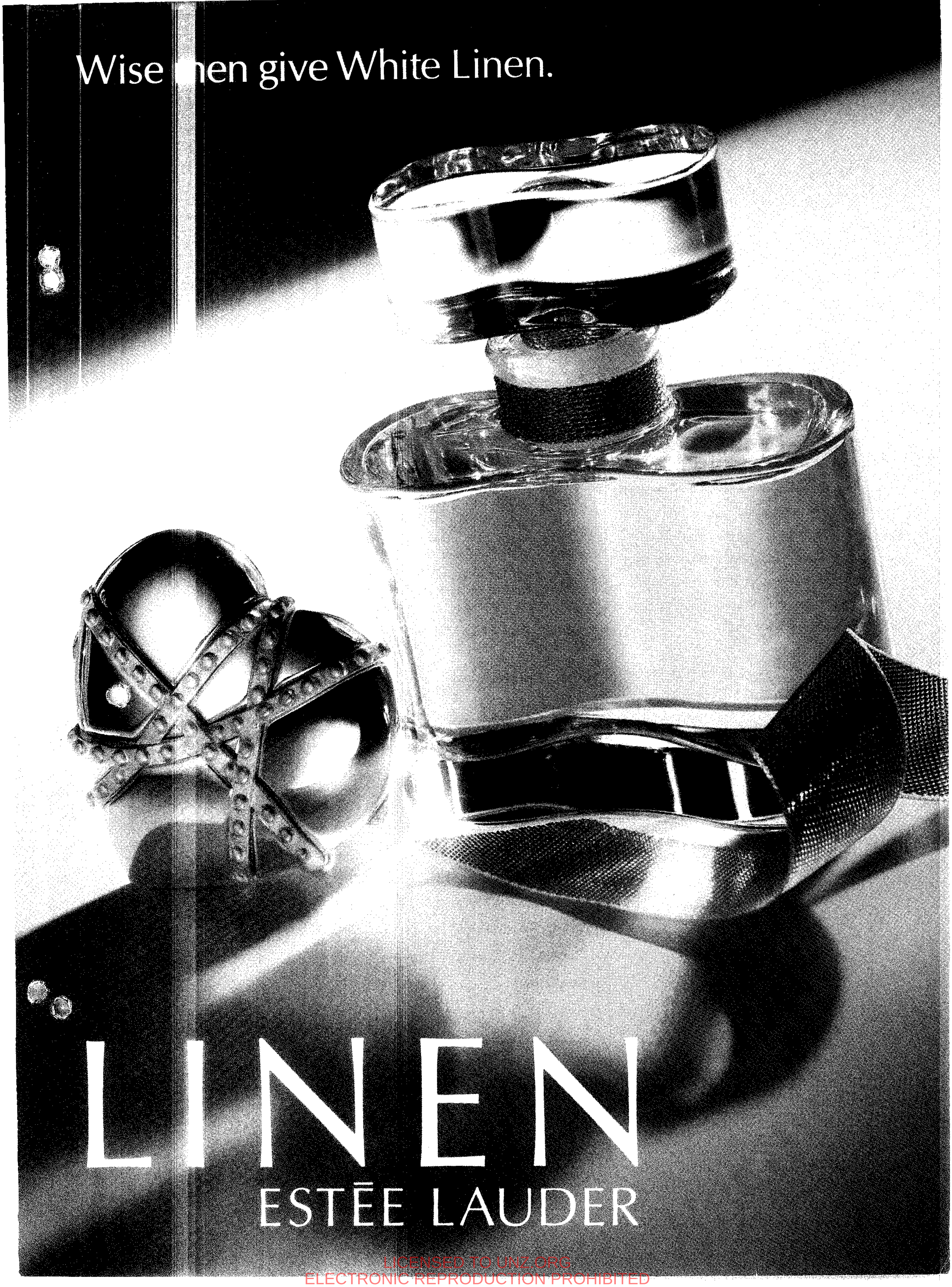
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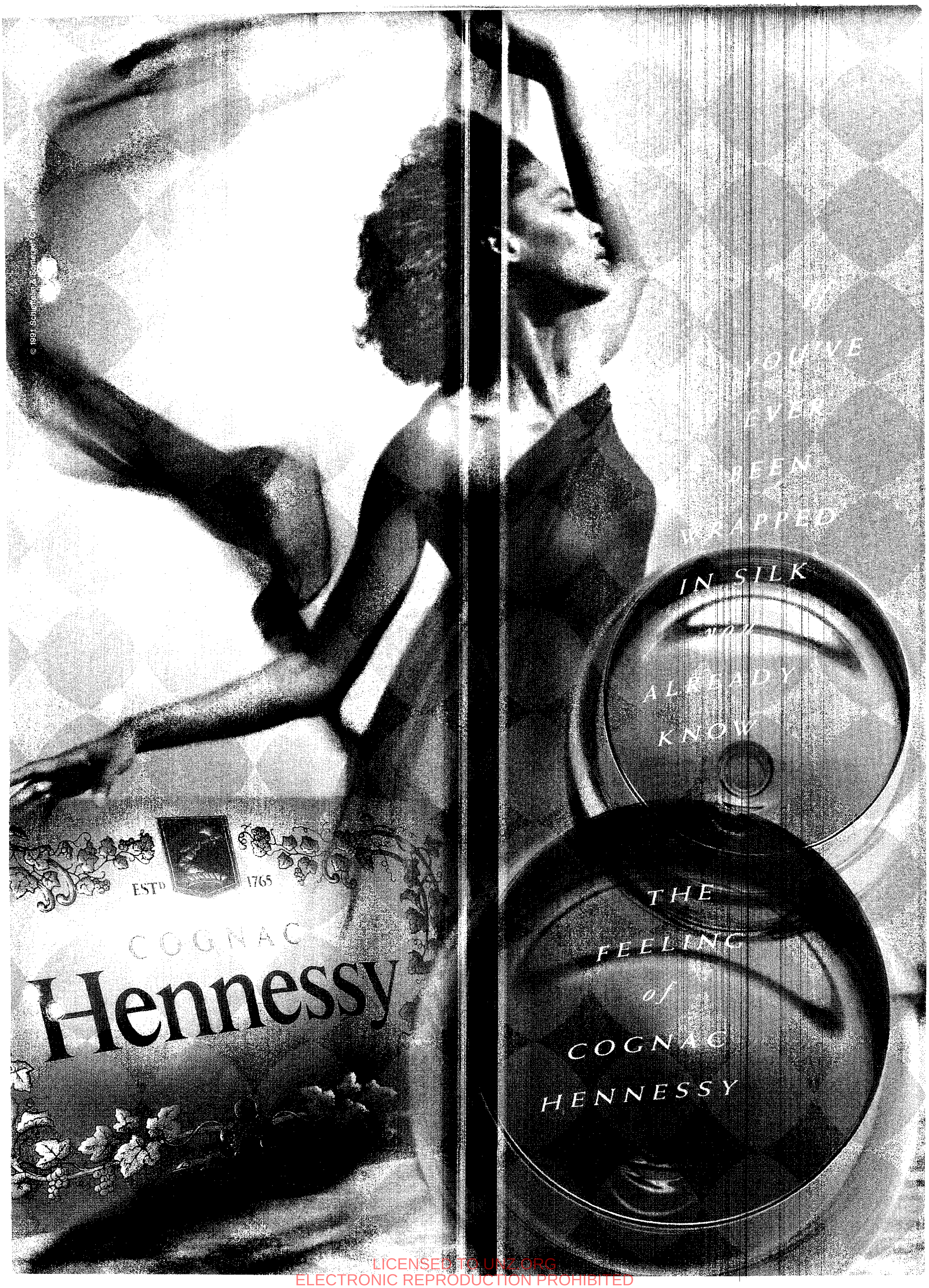
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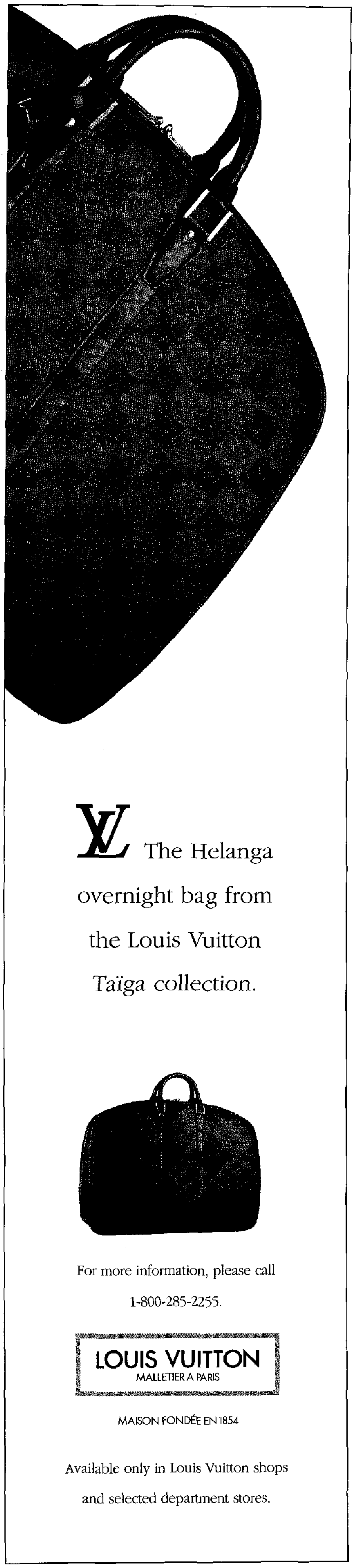

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COMMENT

AFTER BRADY

THE Brady bill has been called "symbolic" so many times recently that one had begun to think it must be about French literature, not American mayhem. But the Brady bill, which became the Brady law last week, in a White House signing ceremony that combined sombreness and celebration in appropriate proportions, is not a mere token. Modest and humble and laughably inadequate though it is, it will in fact *do* some things. Its requirement that prospective pistol purchasers be checked for records of criminality or mental instability will make a difference. The Washington *Post* reported on the day the Brady bill was signed that state-level versions of it in California, Florida, Virginia, and Maryland have prevented over-the-counter sales of more than forty-seven thousand handguns to convicted felons and other ineligible persons since 1989. Just in California, and just in 1991 and 1992, more than eleven thousand such transactions were stopped; the frustrated customers included seventy-one convicted murderers, around nine hundred burglars and robbers, and nearly six thousand people who had been convicted of assault. Thanks to the Brady bill, people who are provably bad, manifestly crazy, or both will be obliged to find some more ingenious method of fulfilling their gun-shopping needs than merely crossing a state line. Inevitably, some of them either won't bother to try or won't be resourceful enough to succeed. Beyond that, the interval the law imposes between purchase and pickup of a handgun—five business days—creates a cooling-off period, during which some number of angry or despairing impulse buyers will decide they don't want to shoot themselves or their girlfriends or boyfriends or rivals or neighbors after all. Brady is also going to make the gunrunning business a little harder, and in some cases a lot harder, by alerting police to individuals who buy two or more guns in a given week, and by raising the price of the license required of anyone seeking to become a federally approved firearms dealer from thirty dollars for three years to a marginally less absurd two hundred dollars. Of course, it will still be easier to obtain a gun dealer's license than a

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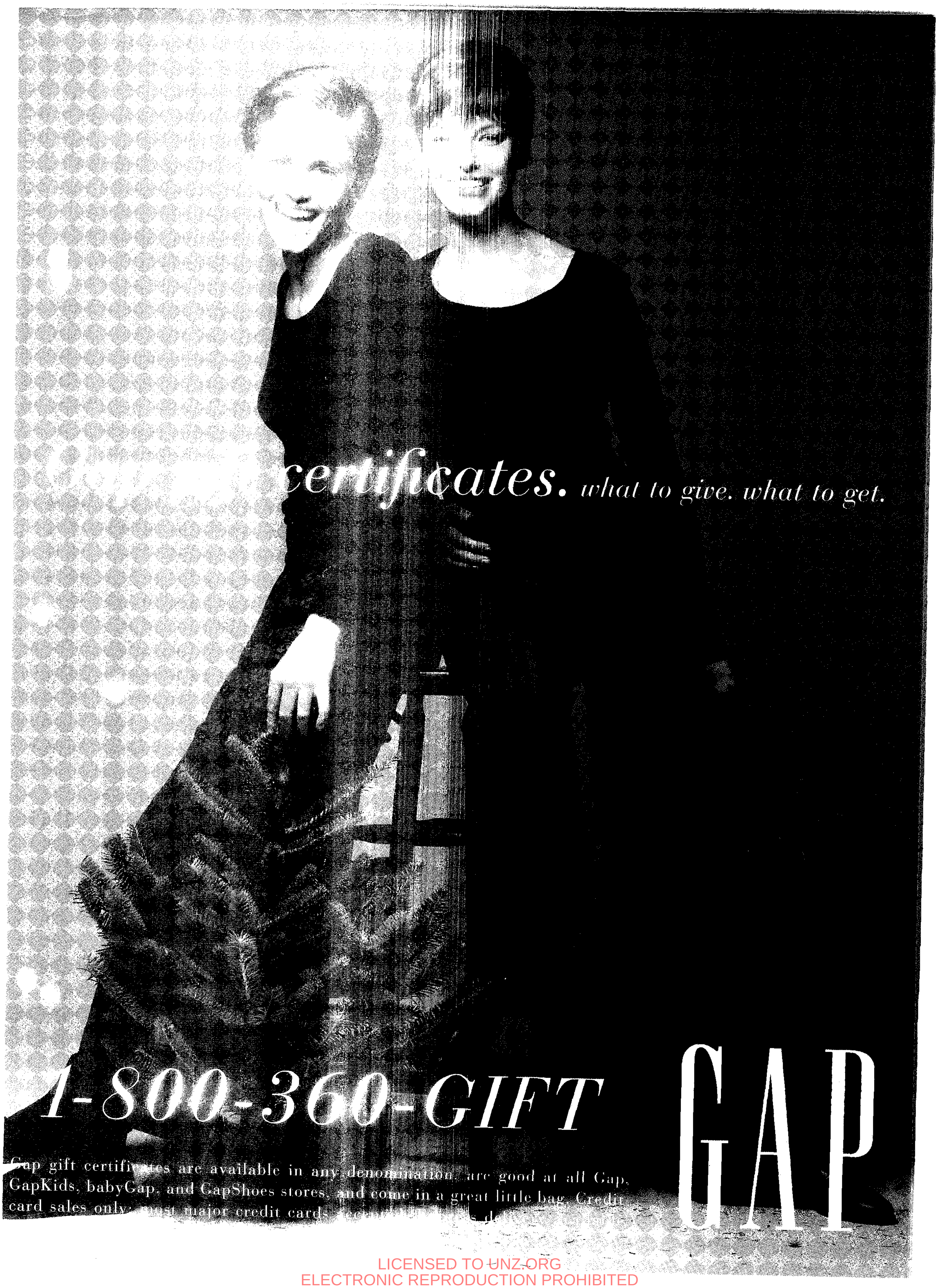
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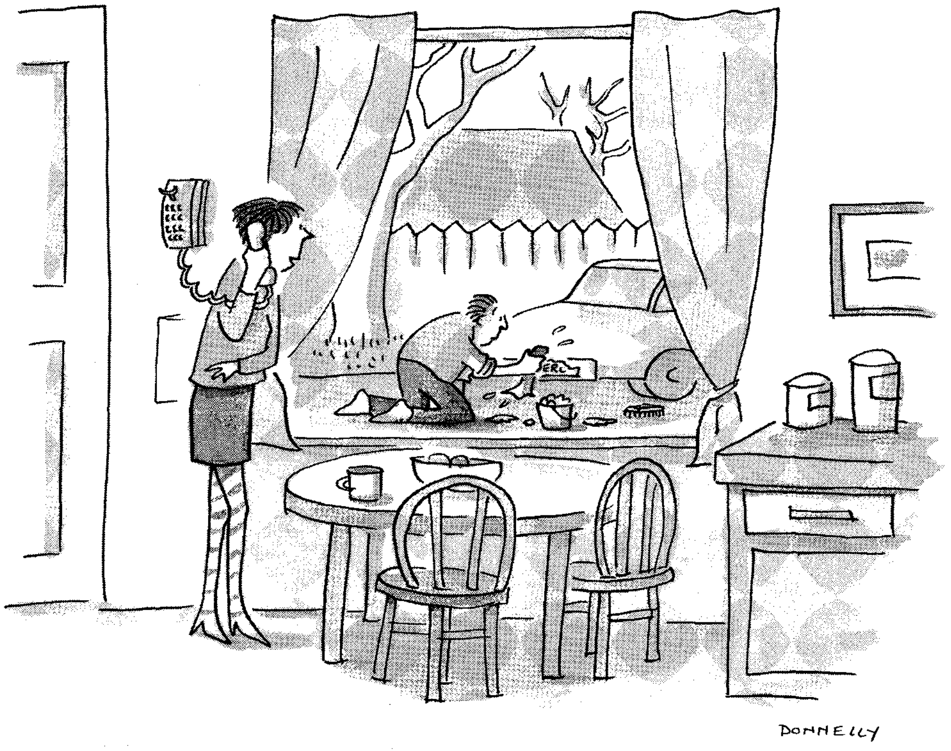
chauffeur's license in this country, and there will still be nearly three hundred thousand registered gun dealers (compared to about forty thousand car dealers), and there will still be no federal waiting period for killers or lunatics wishing to buy rifles or shotguns, and . . . But we were praising what the Brady bill will do, not bemoaning what it won't.

One thing that the Brady bill has already done, before ever thwarting a single sale to a single felon, is to provide the occasion for a political breakthrough. Thirteen years after James Brady, while serving as the White House press secretary, was grievously wounded and permanently disabled in the attempted assassination of President Reagan; seven years after Sarah Brady launched her campaign to do something about guns; two and a half years after the resulting piece of legislation was first passed in the House, the Brady bill is law. It had long commanded a huge majority in the country and an ample one in Congress, but pro-gun Republicans had always had a silver bullet, so to speak: when George Bush was President, the threat of a veto; later, the filibuster. Bob Dole, the Senate Republican leader, deployed the latter weapon to stymie the bill, which had been passed by both houses, but mounting public indignation forced him to let the public will prevail. The enactment of the Brady bill is an important defeat for the leadership of the National Rifle Association (its rank and file seem to have actually supported the bill, according to the polls), and it means that the Republicans will be less than eager to use the filibuster any time soon against other gun-control measures that have broad and enthusiastic support.

A few such measures actually have a chance of passage, thanks partly to the public's growing anxiety about crimes committed with guns and its growing impatience with the N.R.A.'s argument that guns and shootings are unrelated. (It's as if the tobacco lobby, the gun lobby's good buddy, were to argue that there is no connection between cigarettes and smoking, let alone cigarettes and cancer.) The Senate has incorporated some of these measures in its crime bill, including a ban on "assault weapons," which are semi-automatic versions of fully automatic military rifles and pistols, and whose brutal aesthetics appeal to gang members and drug dealers; a ban on handgun sales to kids under eighteen; and more vigilant enforcement of the dealer-licensing laws, such as they are. The one-a-month limit on handgun purchases enacted by Virginia last February may soon be taken up by Congress, too. It's incredible that any of these things should even be controversial. Yet all of them are, of course; and all of them are worth doing, if only to keep the momentum of gun control from drifting to a halt.



"You'd better call back later. He's still trying to get the Perot bumper sticker off his car."

Beyond these lie a profusion of interesting gun-control ideas. In a sly sendup of an old N.R.A. bumper-sticker slogan, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan—saints preserve him!—recently observed, "Guns don't kill people. Bullets do." Accordingly, Moynihan has proposed big excise taxes on certain kinds of ammunition, most notably handgun bullets. The idea is to make users of ammunition assume more of the four-billion-dollar annual cost of treating gunshot wounds. (Simply by bringing up this proposal, Moynihan has induced Winchester to withdraw its Black Talon bullets—named by some company poet for the whirling metal blades they sprout on impact—from the civilian market.) Also kicking around are such ideas as laser-coding every bullet sold so that it is traceable to its purchaser; requiring new guns to be fitted with locks, to make them useless to thieves who don't have the key or the combination; outlawing detachable ammunition magazines with a capacity of more than ten rounds; and setting up a national system for reporting and analyzing gun fatalities under the relatively neutral and non-contentious auspices of a public-health agency.

Ultimately, the country is going to have to decide to take guns as seriously as it takes its other metal household god, the automobile. That will mean, on the automotive analogy, a comprehensive, no-exceptions system of registration for guns and licensing for gun owners—what New York's mayor-elect, Rudolph Giuliani, in (commendably) endorsing it, has described as a "uniform licensing system with real teeth in it," including training, proficiency tests, and mandatory license renewals. Such a program has long been anathema to the gun lobby, which argues that the Second Amendment—"A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed"—would forbid it. The way we read those noble words, though, they don't proscribe an orderly regime of regulation; they *require* one. It would be interesting to find out if the Supreme Court—which, by the way, has never overturned a gun-control law—would agree. ♦

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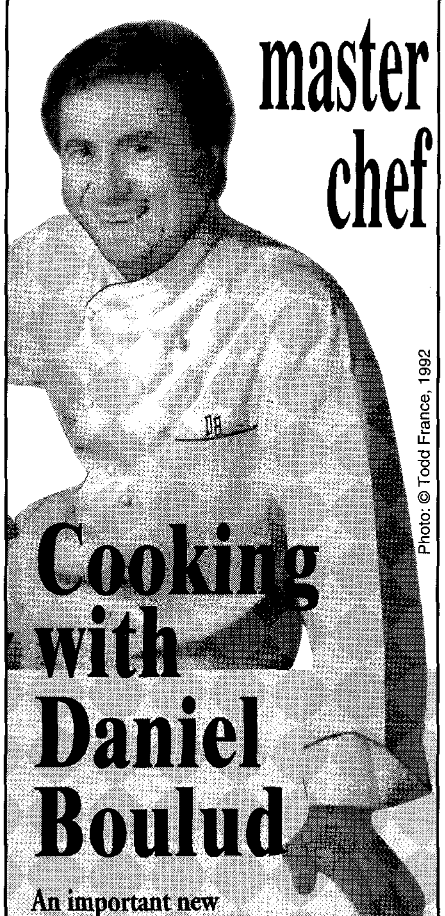

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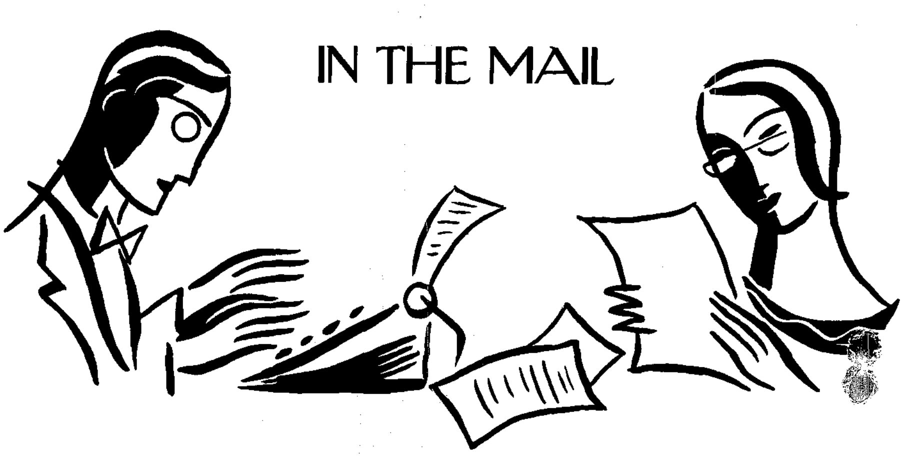


AMPLIFICATIONS

Jane Kramer's article "Bad Blood" (October 11th) gave a misleading account of the actions of Professor Jean-Pierre Allain and caused dismay to those fully familiar with his work. It is difficult now to recapture the uncertainties of the early nineteen-eighties, when there were great doubts amongst doctors as to the significance of the first tests for antibodies to H.I.V. The steps Allain took at that time are detailed in his book "SIDA—Mon Témoignage" (1993) and are independently documented in *The Lancet* of July 24, 1993. Allain was asked in 1983 to coördinate the measurement of immunological changes in hemophiliacs receiving treatment with different blood products administered by their own doctors. The first experimental test for H.I.V. antibodies was devised during 1984, and the results of these tests on the patients in the survey became available to Allain late that year. The devisers of the test opposed the release of results to patients, because of the test's uncertain validity at that stage, but Allain took prompt steps to see that his H.I.V.-negative or untested patients and similar participants in the ongoing clinical survey were given safe treatments. At the same time, he published and disseminated the over-all figures and wrote an urgent recommendation for the introduction of safe blood products. The actions of Professor Allain at that time have been supported by many letters not only from senior colleagues in France and around the world but also from his patients. He has, of course, the full support and confidence of his colleagues in the University of Cambridge.

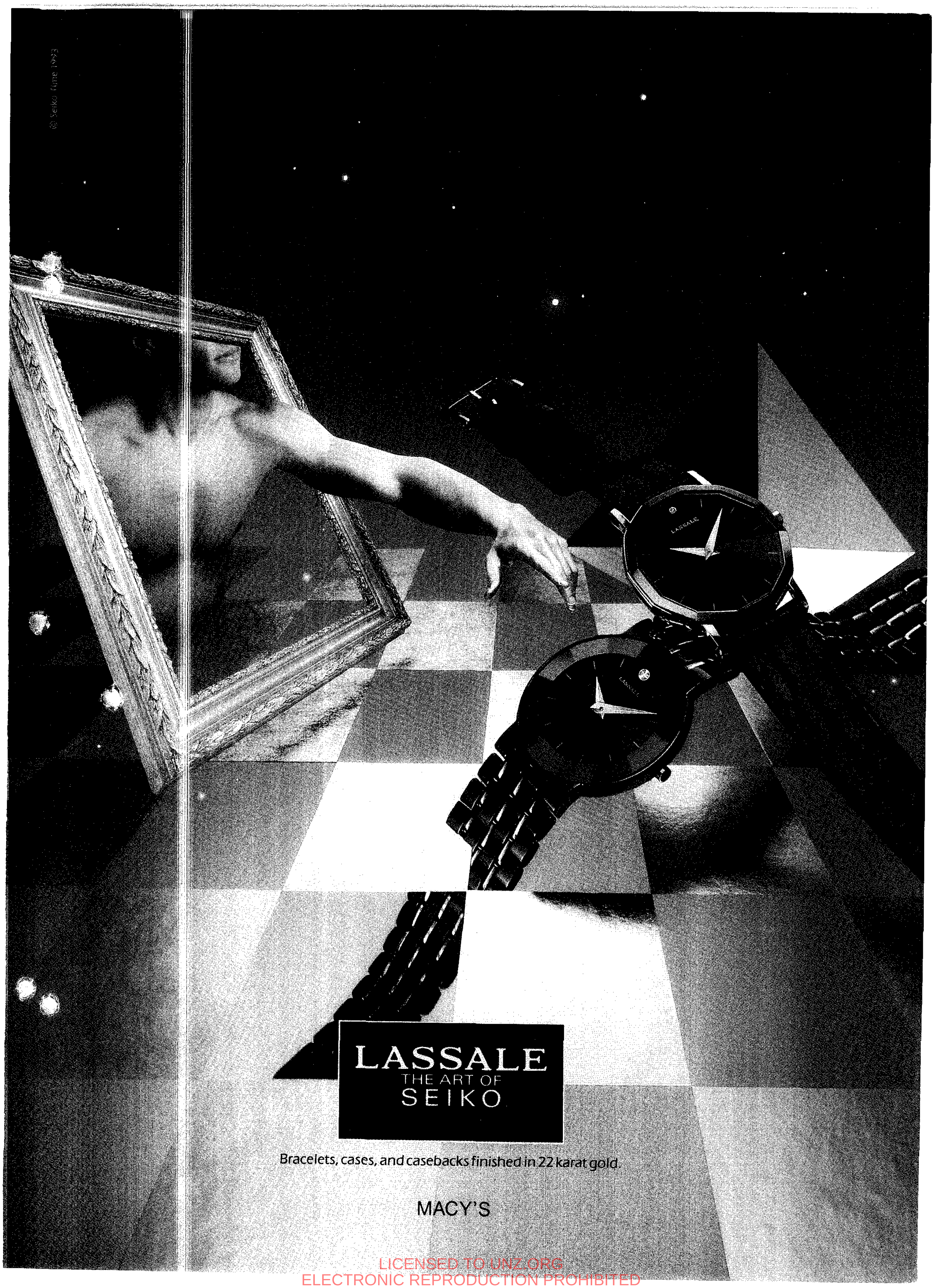
Robin Carrell
Cambridge, England

Jane Kramer's article "Bad Blood" was a remarkable and important piece of medical and political history. Several times since the appearance of that article and a few times before, I have been asked when my colleagues at the National Institutes of Health and I first obtained sufficient evidence that H.I.V. was the cause of AIDS and when we first developed the H.I.V. blood test.

By early 1984, my co-workers and I had come to the conclusion that there was a single specific cause of AIDS—namely, the retrovirus now called H.I.V. This conclusion, along with a description of H.I.V. from patients with AIDS and an announcement of the development of a blood test, were submitted for publication on March 30, 1984. On April 23, 1984, the Secretary of Health and Human Services held a press conference at which these conclusions were made public. Though at that time perhaps only ten to twenty per cent of the people who were infected with H.I.V. had developed AIDS, I believe that most of the involved scientists in the United States strongly suspected that most, if not all, H.I.V.-infected people would ultimately develop AIDS, as has turned out to be the case. Our papers—there were four—were published in *Science* in early May, 1984. The virus had been put into large-scale production by April, 1984, and some commercial companies received virus for major production in June, 1984, in order to expand blood testing in all the blood centers—a time-consuming process. By early 1985, government approval for such testing was granted.

I have provided more details on these events in my book "Virus Hunting" (1991).

Robert C. Gallo
Bethesda, Md.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Adam Gopnik's piece in the November 8th issue persuaded me to trek over to the eyeless snail to see for myself whether the Guggenheim and Roy Lichtenstein do indeed have an ameliorating effect on each other.

The museum really did appear less obtrusively art-killing and backbreaking than it often does. But the pictures? I must admit that even as a child I was not amused by the antics of comic-book icons; I thought they were stupid and ugly then, and I think Lichtenstein's versions are stupid and ugly today. As for his later work, it seems to me to be a reaction to what came before, acting as a form of pictorial art criticism: technically brilliant mockery, zero sustenance. A body of work loved more easily by art critics than by art lovers.

The Pop joke is fun, if you have that kind of sense of humor. But once you engrave it on stone tablets it's no longer a joke. Or, as the writer of the text that accompanies the exhibit explains about the nineteen-sixties paintings, they are about "the power of the media to transform anything into a product regardless of its significance." That's the best joke.

There's nothing mysterious about Lichtenstein's being a happy man. I'd be beaming, too.

RUTH FENNER BARASH
Forest Hills, N.Y.

I was impressed by Adam Gopnik's thoughtful critique of the Guggenheim's Lichtenstein retrospective. For children of the sixties, including me, Pop was a given (one discovered Abstract Expressionism in art-history classes) and reflected our real feelings. Pop's biggest joke may be that there is no joke, but, rather, something more akin to the joy of art, or a youthful glee at life, in the face of reality. May Roy Lichtenstein grow forever young.

TONY MAREY
Wapato, Wash.

UGLY AMERICANS?

Like Andrea Lee, I am neither thin nor stout, but I found her jabs at fat Americans in "Sit on It" (November 8th) offensive. Why is it, in this age of political correctness, that it's still acceptable to take potshots at one of the more abused groups in this country? Try getting a job if you're obese (especially if you're a woman); try ignoring all the pig jokes you're likely to hear in a month. This kind of harassment continues despite mounting evidence that weight has a lot to do with genetics. To show what's going on here, just carry out this simple experiment: Wherever Lee is talking about fat people, substitute "blacks" or "women." There—how does that sound to you?

DAVID GALEF
Oxford, Miss.

In Andrea Lee's "Sit on It" she uses the epithet "Ugly American" as it has been similarly used since the novel by William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick was published, in 1958. But the Ugly American of the book's title, Homer Atkins, is one of the few heroes of the story, which is a scathing indictment of American diplomatic blundering in Southeast Asia. Somehow, over the years, the epithet has come to refer to the villains of the piece—the insensitive tourists, rapacious government types, and other despoilers of foreign lands. Homer Atkins just happened to be physically ugly; his heart was in the right place.

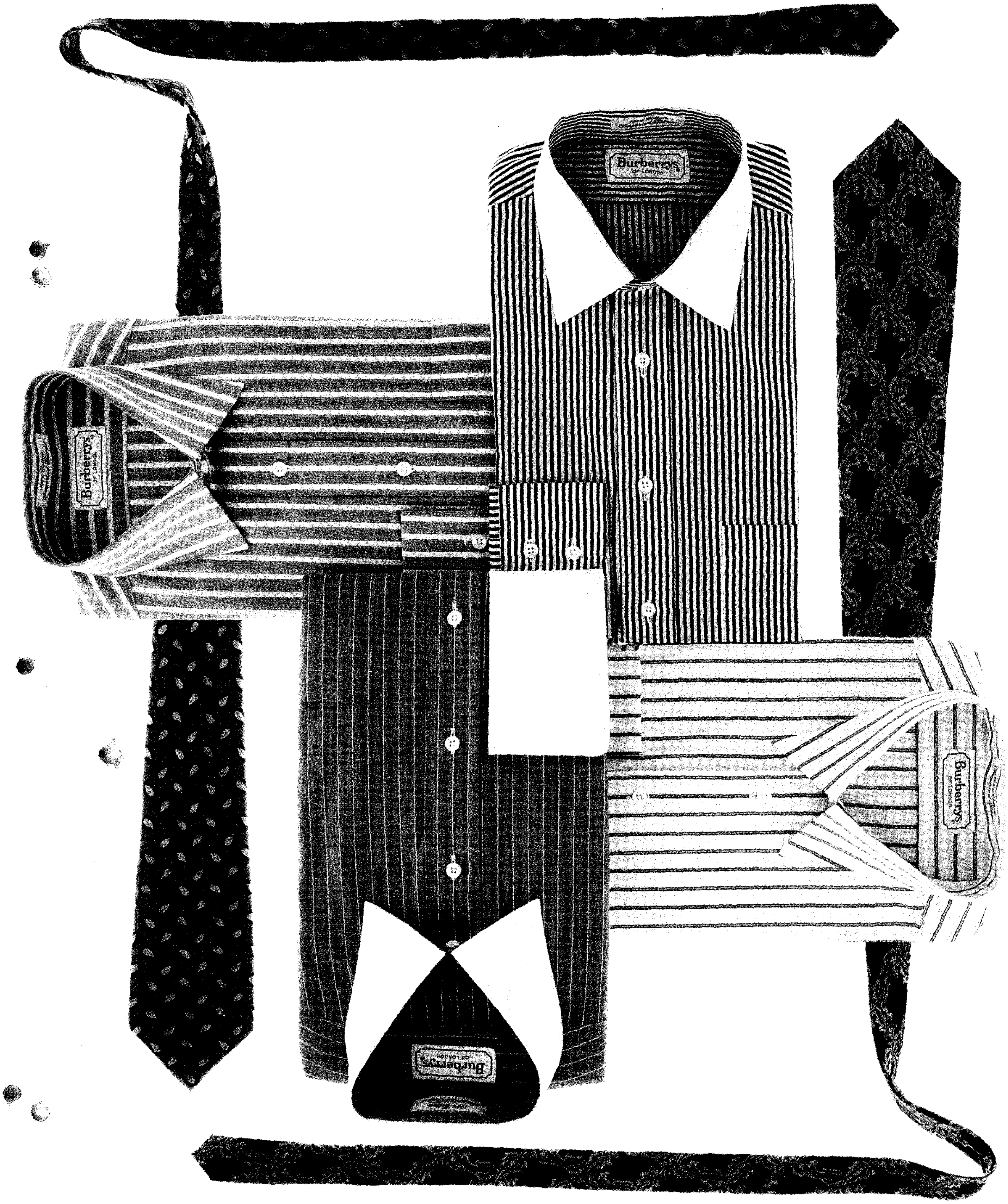
JEANNE S. BAGBY
Tucson, Ariz.

ON TELEVISION

James Wolcott, in his piece contrasting Jerry Seinfeld with Howard Stern, procures his title, "Blows and Kisses" (November 15th), from the critic Leslie Fiedler. Fiedler concludes, in his most recent compilation of essays ("Fiedler on the Roof"), that both "blood" and "race" have become taboo words, to be avoided by the enlightened and the low-minded alike, but Fiedler maintains that he will have no part of it. Wolcott, in his enlightenment, lauds "the cute Jew" Seinfeld for programming sensibility, while knocking "the bad-boy Jew" Stern for fanning the flames of hatred. In writing about Stern, Wolcott would do better to bear in mind the cartoon on page 6 of the same issue of *The New Yorker*. A smiling angel, reviewing the record of a nervous human being arriving in Heaven, remarks, "Blasphemy, yes, but it *was* funny."

JAY P. LEONARD
Fair Lawn, N.J.

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "In the Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

To-Do List

So you're flying into town for the weekend, and you've been elected master of revels, which, unless you're lucky enough to score Knicks or "Nutcracker" tickets, means theatre. You'd like to show up at the half-price booth in Times Square and let fate play the concierge, but you're worried about availability this month. So you call a city friend, and this is what he tells you:

"Angels in America" is the best thing in town, but you should see both parts, and each is a three-and-a-half-hour commitment; "Abe Lincoln in Illinois" runs at an equally operatic length. Of the institutional theatres, Manhattan Theatre Club's leading the pack right now, with "Four Dogs and a Bone," John Patrick Shanley's coruscating look at Hollywood (which moves this week to the Lucille Lortel), and "The Loman Family Picnic," Donald Margulies' sad snapshot of Brooklyn family life in the sixties. In the humor department, you should think about "Laughter on the 23rd Floor," Neil Simon's take on the early days of TV comedy (the first act is particularly amusing), and "Gray's Anatomy," a return to form by Spalding Gray that's barely longer than most Broadway first acts. Musicals? Bypass "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" (unless someone is a fan of the soap star Michael Damian) and "Cyrano" (unless lavish sets and costumes are a priority) and go for a sure bet. No show's a surer thing than "My Fair Lady," even in its newfangled production at the Virginia, and no current musical is a more delightful thing than "First Lady Suite," at the Public. As usual, the ladies have it.

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(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

The Ash Fire—A comedy by Gavin Kostick. In previews. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

First Lady Suite—Musical portraits of Eleanor Roosevelt, Mamie Eisenhower, and Jacqueline Kennedy, by Michael John LaChiusa. Priscilla Baskerville, Maureen Moore, Carolann Page, Alice Playten, Debra Stricklin, David Wasson, and Carol Woods are in the cast. Previews through Dec. 12 matinée. Opens Dec. 12. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Greetings!—A comedy by Tom Dudzick, [illegible]h Darren McGavin, Lenore Loveman, and Gregg Edelman. *Previews through Dec. 12. Opens* Dec. 13 at 8. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 967-9077.)

My Fair Lady—Richard Chamberlain is Henry Higgins and Melissa Errico is Eliza Doolittle in this revival of the Lerner and Loewe musical. Two previews on Dec. 8. Opens Dec. 9 at 6:30. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

The Red Shoes—A new musical, based on the 1948 movie, with a score by Jule Styne, a book by Marsha Norman, and lyrics by Ms. Norman and Paul Stryker. In previews. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Abe Lincoln in Illinois—Sam Waterston has the title role in a production of Robert E. Sherwood's 1938 play. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

All for One—A comedy by Paul Weitz, with John Speredakos and Noëlle Parker. (Ensemble Studio Theatre, 549 W. 52nd St. 247-3405. Closes Dec. 19.)

All in the Timing—An evening of six one-act comedies by Dav[illegible] Ives. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45[illegible] St. 333-7471. Closes Dec. 19.)

Angels in America—"Millennium Approaches" and "Perestroika," the two parts of Tony Kushner's epic work, ru[illegible]n repertory. ("Perestroika" is [illegible]viewed in this issue; "Millennium Approaches" was reviewed in our issue of 5/31/93.) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Annie Warbucks—Kathryn Zaremba, an infant phenomenon if ever there was one, has the title role in this beguiling sequel to "Annie." (8/23 & 30/93) (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

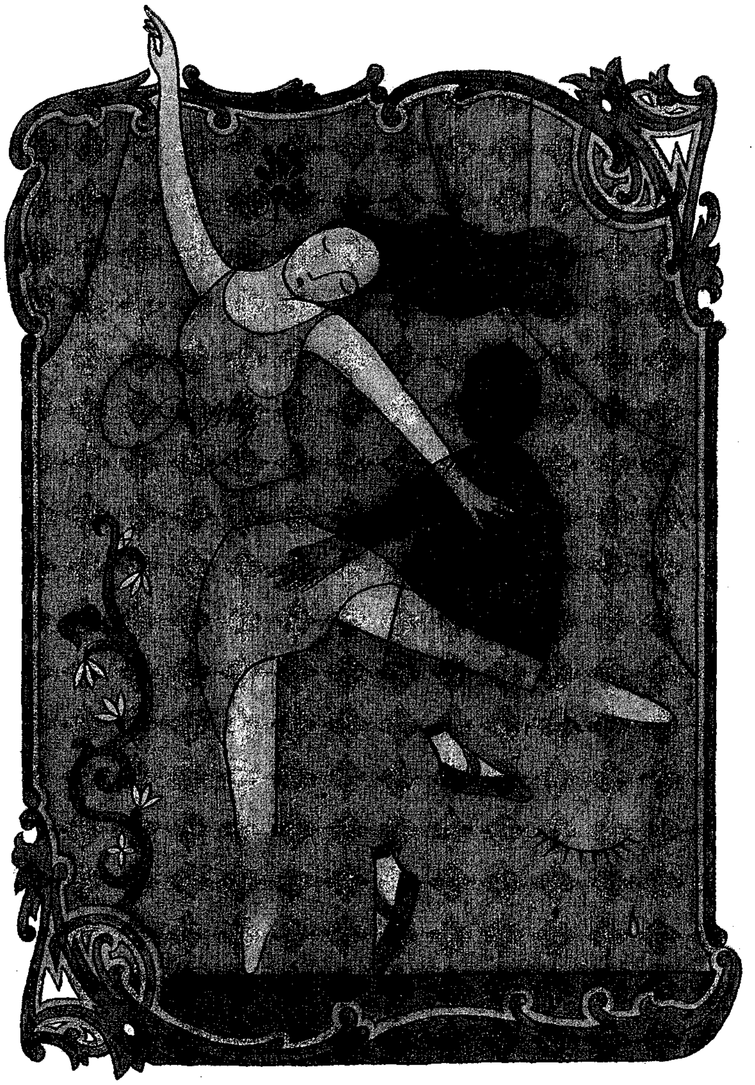
Any Given Day—Frank D. Gilroy's new play demonstrates that dysfunctional families existed as far back as 1941. Sada Thompson, Andrew Robinson, and Victor Slezak stand out among the cast. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Blood Brothers—Willy Russell's musical, with Shaun Cassidy, David Cassidy, and Petula Clark. (5/10/93) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Cyrano: The Musical—The nose[illegible] have it. (Neil Simon, 25[illegible]V. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

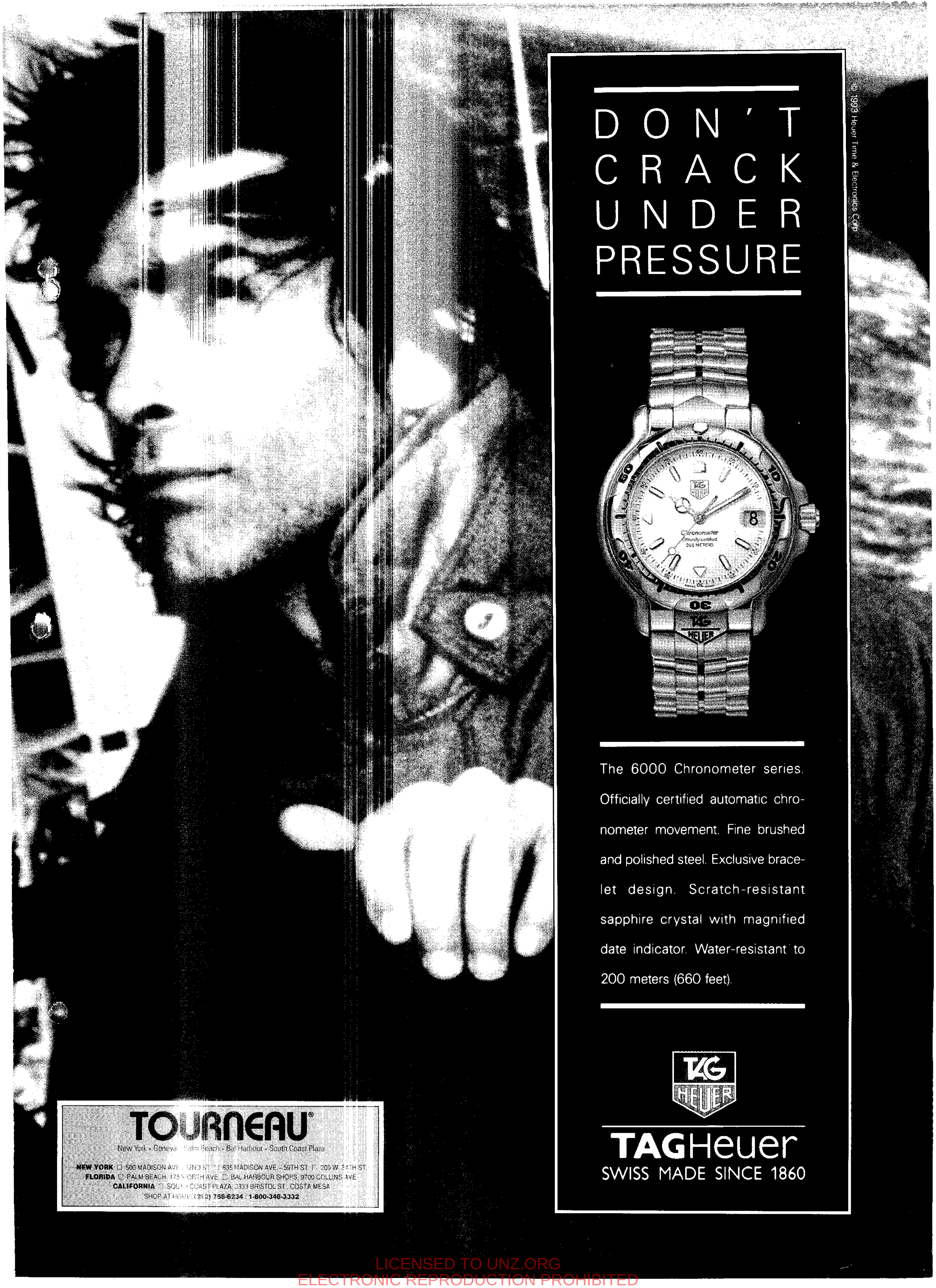
Family Secrets—Sherry Glaser is the sole, physically adept, very funny performer in this comedy about a Jewish family, which she wrote with Greg Howells. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Forbidden Broadway 1994—This edition of Gerard Alessandrini's parodies is disappointing in spite of a few sharp lines and ideas, and even they are blurred by the all but unbearable amplification. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)



Margaret Illmann in "The Red Shoes."

STEFANO VITALE



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THE THEATRE-Cont'd

Four Dogs and a Bone—The "bone" of John Patrick Shanley's satiric comedy is a movie, and the "four dogs" are its producer, writer, and two actresses, who together make the funniest foursome in town. They are played by Tony Roberts, Loren Dean, Polly Draper, and Mary-Louise Parker. Performances resume Dec. 9. (11/15/93) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

The Game of Love and Chance—An eighteenth-century comedy by Pierre Marivaux. With Sean Pratt, Raye Lankford, Margo Skinner, and Timothy Wheeler. Shepard Sobel directed. (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708. Closes Dec. 11.)

A Grand Night for Singing!—Indeed. This expanded version of the Rodgers and Hammerstein revue that originated at Rainbow & Stars pampers its audience. The singers are Jason Graae, Alyson Reed, Martin Vidnovic, Victoria Clark, and Lynne Wintersteller. Tony Walton designed the exquisite setting. Suzzanne Douglas replaces Ms. Reed starting Dec. 14. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Gray's Anatomy—Monologuist Spalding Gray is back, this time to talk about his eye troubles, among other matters. Sundays and Mondays only. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Howard Crabtree's Whoop-Dee-Doo!—A witty and topical musical revue. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. For information about tickets, call 777-7474.)

How to Write a Play—Charles Ludlam's wild farce, adapted and directed by and starring Everett Quinton, is a triumph for all concerned. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, One Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

An Imaginary Life—A play by Peter Parnell. Caroline Aaron, Reed Birney, Christopher Collet, Tim Blake Nelson, Jonathan Walker, and Chip Zien make up the cast. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—Performances of Pirandello's "Enrico IV" alternate with Shaw's "Heartbreak House." (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Jeffrey—A comedy, by Paul Rudnick, about love in the age of AIDS. It is less a fleshed-out play than a series of Scenes from Gay Life, but Mr. Rudnick can quip with the best of them. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 420-8000.)

Jimmy Tingle's Uncommon Sense—Tingle speaks from a leftist blue-collar worker's perspective in his politically charged one-man show. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

Johnny Pye and the Foolkiller—This new musical by Mark St. Germain and Randy Courts, based on a short story by Stephen Vincent Benét, is a charmingly peculiar combination of sweetness and philosophizing. With Spiro Malas, Heather Lee Soroka, Kaitlin Hopkins, and Daniel Jenkins. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. Closes Dec. 12.)

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat—Like a kaleidoscope, Andrew Lloyd Webber's flippant new mega-version of his first musical is bright, ever-changing, and utterly meaningless. As Joseph, Michael Damian is physically nimble and vocally wan. Everyone else conspires to wring an ovation out of the over-stimulated audience. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

The Kentucky Cycle—Robert Schenkkan's six-hour, two-part play, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1992, has arrived on Broadway. Stacy Keach heads the cast. (12/6/93) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Kiss of the Spider Woman—A musical, based on the novel by Manuel Puig, with a distinguished book by Terrence McNally and a star performance by the redoubtable Chita Rivera in the title role. Harold Prince was the director. The songs are by John Kander and Fred Ebb. (5/24/93) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Later Life—The reunion, after thirty years, of a middle-aged man and woman who were once in love is at the heart of this play by A. R. Gurney. Mr. Gurney has written with his customary wit and perception, and the actors do him proud. (6/14/93) (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Laughter on the 23rd Floor—Neil Simon's comedy takes place during the early days of live TV. Starring Nathan Lane, Randy Graff, and Mark Linn-Baker. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Life Sentences—Richard Nelson's story about a college English professor and his live-in girlfriend has suffered somewhat in its transition from television drama to theatre piece: the monologues of the girlfriend, who is played by Michelle Joyner, are less textured and less dramatic than the speeches of the professor, who is played with droll unawareness by Edward Herrmann. John Caird directed, fluently. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

The Lights—Howard Korder's nihilistic, unremittingly bleak portrait of life in a nameless city during "the modern era." With Kristen Johnston, Kathleen Dennehy, and Dan Futterman. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 12.)

The Little Prince—A musical adaptation of the 1943 book by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. With Ramzi Khalaf in the title role. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

The Loman Family Picnic—A play by Donald Margulies about a Jewish family in Brooklyn during the sixties. Lynne Meadow directed. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Negro Ensemble Company—Presenting "Olivia's Opus," a one-woman show by Nora Cole. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 346-8510. Closes Dec. 19.)

Out Is In—Comic Kate Clinton solos in her Off Broadway début. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 229-7770.)

Pretty Fire—Charlayne Woodard wrote and stars in this autobiographical one-woman show about being a black child in upstate New York in the sixties. (Sylvia and Danny Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448.)

Shakespeare for My Father—A marvellous one-woman show, in which Lynn Redgrave revisits her own life in a search for her unloving father, Michael Redgrave. She combines anecdotes, brilliant thumbnail impersonations of British actors, and wry reminiscence with passages from Shakespeare. (5/10/93) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9[illegible].)

She Loves Me—The Roundabout's production of the 1963 Bock-Harnick-Masteroff musical. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

Shepherd!—George Fischoff's one-man musical about King David, of Biblical fame. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. For reservations, call 1-718 271-7260.)

The Survivor—A completely rethought version of Susan Nanus's 1981 play of the same name. The show focusses on the experiences of a teen-aged boy who ran a smuggling operation in the Warsaw Ghetto during the Second World War and then survived several concentration camps. He and his cohorts are typical teenagers and remain so in many ways even as they enter a nightmare. Although the script tends to be didactic, the characters are vibrant and affecting. W. Aaron Harpold, as the boy, Sam Gray, and Heather Gottlieb are especially good among a talented cast; Sasha Nanus directed. (Manhattan Performing Arts Company, 120 W. 28th St. 580-0099. Closes Dec. 19.)

The Swan—Elizabeth Egloff's new play explores Sam Shepard territory, with a surreal twist. A woman, her married lover, and a swan-turned-man form a volatile love triangle. There's melodrama, but there's also power, and both are mixed with humor. The cast—Frances McDormand, David Chandler, and Peter Stormare—is superb. Directed by Les Waters. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Dec. 12.)

Top Girls—A revival of Caryl Churchill's 1983 play, featuring Kelly Clark. (Harold Clurman, 412 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

Trophies—A play by John Wooten. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2285.)

The Who's Tommy—Pete Townshend's music—however muted for Broadway—has an indubitable thrill. This adaptation was directed by Des McAnuff. (5/3/93) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **OLEANNA:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. [illegible]7-4100. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** 47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE SISTERS ROSENSWEIG:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

THE RADIO CITY CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR—In ninety minutes, nine technologically enhanced holiday fantasy scenes whiz by; the Rockettes are dizzyingly precise in their several showcase numbers. (Sixth Ave. at 50th St. Through Jan. 8. For information about tickets, call 247-4777.)

BIG APPLE CIRCUS—Of the many current extravaganzas at Lincoln Center, this is the only one that features Chinese acrobats, a Swiss tennis-racquet juggler, Italian clowns, and German aerialists, as well as four elephants, ten stallions, and a poodle. (Damrosch Park. Through Jan. 9. For information about show times and tickets, call 268-0055.)

"HOUSE OF BUGGIN' "—Comedy sketches by John Leguizamo and David Bar Katz, performed by eight actors, including Mr. Leguizamo. (Downtown Art Co., 64 E. 4th St. Dec. 9-11 at 10:30 and Dec. 12 at 8. Through Dec. 19. For reservations, call 477-5288.)

OTRABANDA COMPANY—Presenting "Movement in 3 Locations," a dance-theatre piece performed by Vicki S[illegible]ick, Rocky Bornstein, and others. (Downtown Art Co., 64 E. 4th St. 732-1227. Dec. 9-11 at 8 and Dec. 12 at 5. Through Dec. 19.)

"DUPLEX PLANET" RADIO HOUR—David Greenberger delivers monologues from *Duplex Planet*, his magazine based on interviews with senior citizens. Pianist Terry Adams, of NRBQ, provides musical accompaniment. The first program in a series of four this season. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. Dec. 12 at 7.)

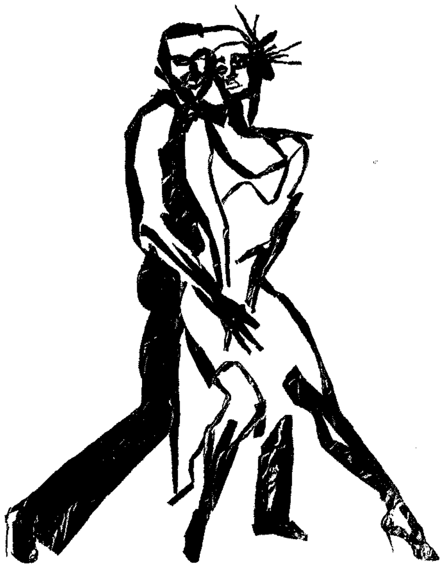
"FORT HEAD: ONE GAY JOURNEY THROUGH THE VIETNAM ERA MILITARY"—Chris Burnside's monologue about Army life. (Dixon Place, 258 Bowery, near Houston St. 219-3088. Dec. 12 at 8. Through Dec. 20.)

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET—"The Nutcracker," through Jan. 2. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Dec. 8-9 and Dec. 14 at 6; Dec. 10 at 8; Dec. 11 at 2 and 8; and Dec. 12 at 1 and 5. The season continues through Feb. 27.)

"THE HARD NUT"—The opening performance of Mark Morris's downtown (and across the river) version of the Nutcracker story, with a retro setting, no children, and male Snowflakes and Flowers. The work had its United States première here last year; the plan is to establish it as an annual event. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Dec. 14 at 7. Through Dec. 23.)

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATRE—The company begins a four-week engagement. Dec. 8 at 7: "Revelations," "Hymn" (première), showings of videos, poetry readings, and some speechmaking for the gala evening. . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 8: "The Winter in Lisbon," "Shelter," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 10 at 8: "Dance at the Gym," "Jukebox for Alvin" (première), and "The River." . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 2: "Fontessa and Friends," "Frames," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 8: "The Mooche," "Shelter," and "The Winter in Lisbon." . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 3: "The River," "Frames," and "The Winter in Lisbon." . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 7:30: "Blues Suite," "Cry," "Jukebox for Alvin," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 8: "Revelations" and excerpts from other classic Ailey works. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. The engagement runs through Jan. 2.)



Marilyn Banks and Andre Tyson in Alvin Ailey's "Blues Suite."

CARLOS APONTE

EIKO & KOMA—In "Wind," an evening-length work. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Dec. 8-10 at 8, Dec. 11 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 12 at 2 and 7:30.)

PATRICIA HOFFBAUER—With other dancers, in "Appropriations," "Who Killed Carmen?" (première), "Two Characters in Search of a Performance Piece (Soft Touches)," and "Incident at an Appropriation Day." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Dec. 8-11 at 8.)

ELISA KING & DANCERS—In "Days of Hope and Circumstance" (première), "Crossings" (company première), "Familiar Secrets," and "Witness." (St. Clement's Church, 423 W. 46th St. Dec. 8-11 at 8. For reservations, call 924-0077.)

DANCEBRAZIL—Presenting "Pivete," an evening-length work for ten dancers, six musicians, and local children. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Dec. 9-12 at 8:30. Through Dec. 20.)

"CONSTANZA"—The New York première of an evening-length dance-theatre work by Margarita Guergué, a Spanish choreographer. Performed by Ms. Guergué and Veronica de Soyza to an original violin score by the composer Hahn Rowe. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5763. Dec. 9-11 at 8 and Dec. 12 at 3.)

"A WINTER CELEBRATION OF DANCE"—Members of the Marymount Manhattan College dance department offer a variety of dance styles and choreography. (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. 517-0651. Dec. 9-11 at 8 and Dec. 12 at 3.)

TIMOTHY BUCKLEY—In "A Letter to Diaghilev." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Dec. 13-16 at 8.)

AMERICAN INDIAN DANCE THEATRE—The opening performance in a three-week engagement, by a company of twenty-one dancers, singers, and musicians. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave. at 19th St. 242-0800. Dec. 14 at 8. Through Jan. 2.)

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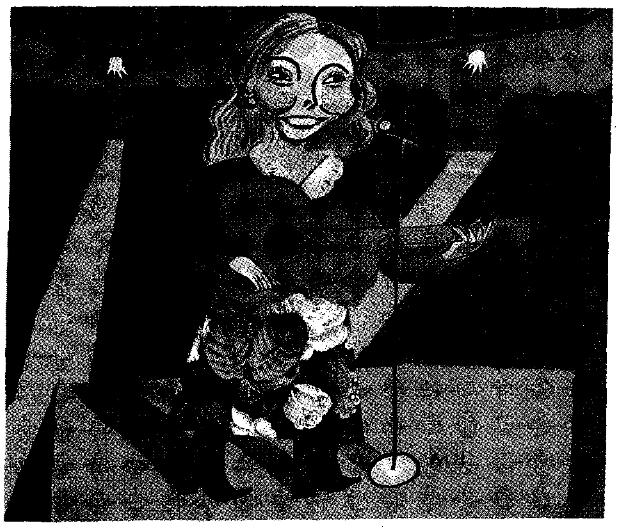
NIGHT LIFE

The Interpreter

"THERE's not a single song on any of my albums that I'm tired of," says Emmylou Harris, who clearly has the confidence and self-regard to know her reputation isn't based on hits and new product. Though she's made almost two dozen albums, won six Grammys, and been called both the Queen of Country and the Godmother of the New Traditionalists, Harris doesn't seem very interested in titles or awards. She came to country music, she says, "through the back door, through harmony," a reference to her work with her first real musical partner, Gram Parsons, the country-rock trailblazer who died too young in 1973. Harris acknowledges Parsons' tremendous influence; he encouraged her to take country songs seriously, instead of singing them tongue in cheek. His push developed into her self-acknowledged gift: interpretation. "I'm not one of those singers who think that in order to be worthwhile I have to write all the songs," she says. "There are too many good songwriters out there." Though she has covered everyone from Bill Monroe to the Beatles and Bruce Springsteen, the result is always organic country.

"Cowgirl's Prayer," Harris's latest album, displays the same solid choices her fans have come to expect. It feels of a piece. The harder-driving "High Powered Love" and "The Light" are just louder prayers than the aching "You Don't Know Me." "All it takes is one song to create a magnetic field, and the album will lead you," Harris says. Ask her how she brings that vibrato, that tremor into her voice, and the otherwise voluble singer shuts down. "I'm not a technical singer—I don't think when I sing. If the words are true for you, you trust them." At the Beacon on December 9, the song mix will include half a dozen numbers from the new album and probably a couple from the Christmas album. In any case, we can't think of a single song we're tired of, either.



Emmylou Harris at the Beacon Theatre.

MARCELLUS HALL

CONCERTS

Mariah Carey—It's easy to pick on Mariah Carey: she sings songs with titles like "Vision of Love" and "Hero," makes dopey videos that match the middle-of-the-road earnestness of her material, and she married the president of her record company. But at twenty-three Mrs. Tommy Mottola still has some time left to figure out that her dazzling pipes have been wasted on the R. & B.-flavored pabulum she's been manufacturing, and that it's not how many octaves a vocalist can accommodate but her emotional range that matters in the end. (Of course, we're still waiting for Whitney Houston to sort all this out as well.) In the meantime, Carey's performance should be full of sexy outfits, meaningful gazes, and lovely, pear-shaped vowel sounds. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Dec. 10 at 8.)

Squeeze—In the late seventies and early eighties, Squeeze's Chris Difford and Glenn Tilbrook were being touted as the Lennon and McCartney of the post-punk era. Classic Squeeze singles like "Tempted" and "Black Coffee in Bed," from the band's heyday, certainly rank with the smartest, most poignant pop music of that period. Since then, Squeeze—which broke up for a while, then re-formed with refreshingly little hoopla in 1985—has occasionally succumbed to the sort of cleverer-than-thou glibness that has thwarted many a postmodern English band. Melodist Tilbrook has never lost his knack for powerfully wistful hooks, however, and there are some wonderful tunes on the group's current album, "Some Fantastic Place." Opening for Squeeze are New Jersey's own Smithereens, who also rock tunefully, but in a harder vein. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Dec. 10-11 at 8.)

NRBQ—Often hailed as the world's greatest bar band, NRBQ is one act that can live up to the hype. There just isn't another band with such a mastery of virtually every American popular-music idiom, from rockabilly and blues to jazz and swing. Anyone looking for an example of this unique blend should check out the group's transcendent version of "Whistle While You Work," on "Stay Awake," producer Hal Willner's 1988 tribute to Disney music. Still, one should be prepared for the worst, too. The Q is famous for self-inflicted debacles and sloppy, disinterested performances. This gig may have minor historical importance: rumors abound that the band's Bronx-born bassist, Joey Spampinato, will soon find himself moonlighting with a certain English supergroup. Keep your eyes peeled for Mick or Keith. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. Dec. 11 at 8.)

Emmylou Harris—With Riders in the Sky. (Beacon Theatre. Dec. 9 at 8.)

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan—Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Dec. 9 at 8.

Frankie Beverly and Maze—With Toni Braxton. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Dec. 10 at 7 and 11:30.)

Carol Sloane—Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Dec. 10 at 8.

Cherish the Ladies—An all-female, Irish-American group of instrumentalists, singers, and dancers. (Symphony Space. Dec. 11 at 8.)

Michael Isaacson & the Israel Pops—Paramount. Dec. 11 at 8:30.

"The Colors of Christmas"—A concert with Peabo Bryson, Roberta Flack, Patti Austin, Jeffrey Osborne, the Boys Choir of Harlem, and others. (Beacon Theatre. Dec. 14 at 8. Through Dec. 19.)

Roulette—Jim Staley, Dec. 9; Joey Baron, Dec. 10; and Elise Kermani, Dec. 11. (228 West Broadway. 219-8242. Concerts at 9.)

STANDARDS AND CABARET

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**WESLIA WHITFIELD** *continues her engagement in* the Oak Room. She is probably the most assured and affecting jazz-cabaret voice to appear in New York in years. With Mike Greensill on piano. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is currently home to **BOBBY SHORT.** Time has not diminished the tasteful virtuosity of Short's ivory-tinkling; nor has it taken the edge off his gregarious wit as a singer and showman. Now in his twenty-sixth year at the Carlyle, Short can still spin an Ira Gershwin lyric with all the humor, sophistication, and pathos it deserves. Also well served are gems by Duke Ellington, Dorothy Fields, Irving Berlin, and of course, Cole Porter. A de-lightful, de-lovely evening. With Beverly Peer on bass and Robbie Scott on drums. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—The main dining room strives for the appearance of a British pub but looks more like a good old American family restaurant. Still, there's a nice red telephone booth when you walk in the door. Martin Charnin's "The Next-to-the-Last Revue" continues an open-ended run. On Monday evenings, Woody Allen continues his night job, playing clarinet in a Dixieland-jazz ensemble known as the **NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA.**

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret with plenty of niceties, if you're so inclined: an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with plastic diamonds and sapphires; and an amazing view. All this week: "The Leonard Bernstein Revue: A Helluva Town!," featuring a cast of Broadway alumni—Marilyn Caskey, Lauren Mitchell, J. Mark McVey, Patrick Quinn, and Ruth Williamson. Closed Mondays.

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—On Dec. 12-13, this upstairs cabaret will present a "Noël Coward Weekend," though it might be more precisely termed a "weekbeginning." Precision, after all, was Coward's middle name. He could turn a phrase on a dime, and match word to music so deftly that he's been aptly described as Gilbert and Sullivan rolled into one. Coward's biographer **SHERIDAN MORLEY** will officiate over the proceedings, and the music-making will be entrusted to the capable talents of **K. T. SULLIVAN** and **DAVID STALLER.** The menu here is well known for its nutritious offerings in the three basic food groups: champagne, vodka, and caviar.

Supper Club, *240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—Fri*days, in the main room, Steve Minichello's "House of la Cage" brings together Judy, Liza, Marilyn, and Bette in a sequinned, feathered *hommage* to the greatest divas of our time. There's a particularly impressive Cher medley, and Diana Ross is represented both solo and with the Supremes. These guys can lip-synch with the best of them.

JAZZ AND BLUES

B. Smith's Rooftop Café, 771 Eighth Ave., at 47th St. (247-2222)—Above B. Smith's restaurant, a spacious high-ceilinged café, where some interesting jazz and R. & B. artists have been showing up lately. On Dec. 11: **LENY ANDRADE,** a warm, intuitive singer (and able scatter) who's been called the First Lady of Brazilian jazz, continues an extended run of Friday- and Saturday-evening performances (minus a couple of Fridays in December). Dinner (Continental cuisine, basically) is served during the early show.

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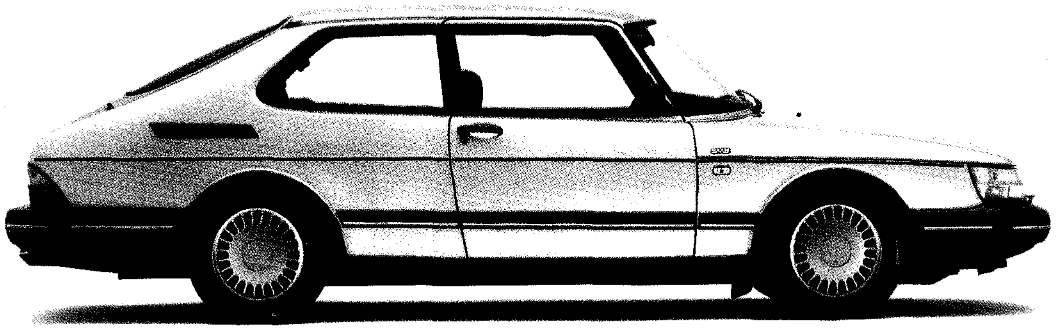
WERE THE STARES.



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THEN THE WAITING LISTS.

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WHICH FEW CARS HAVE
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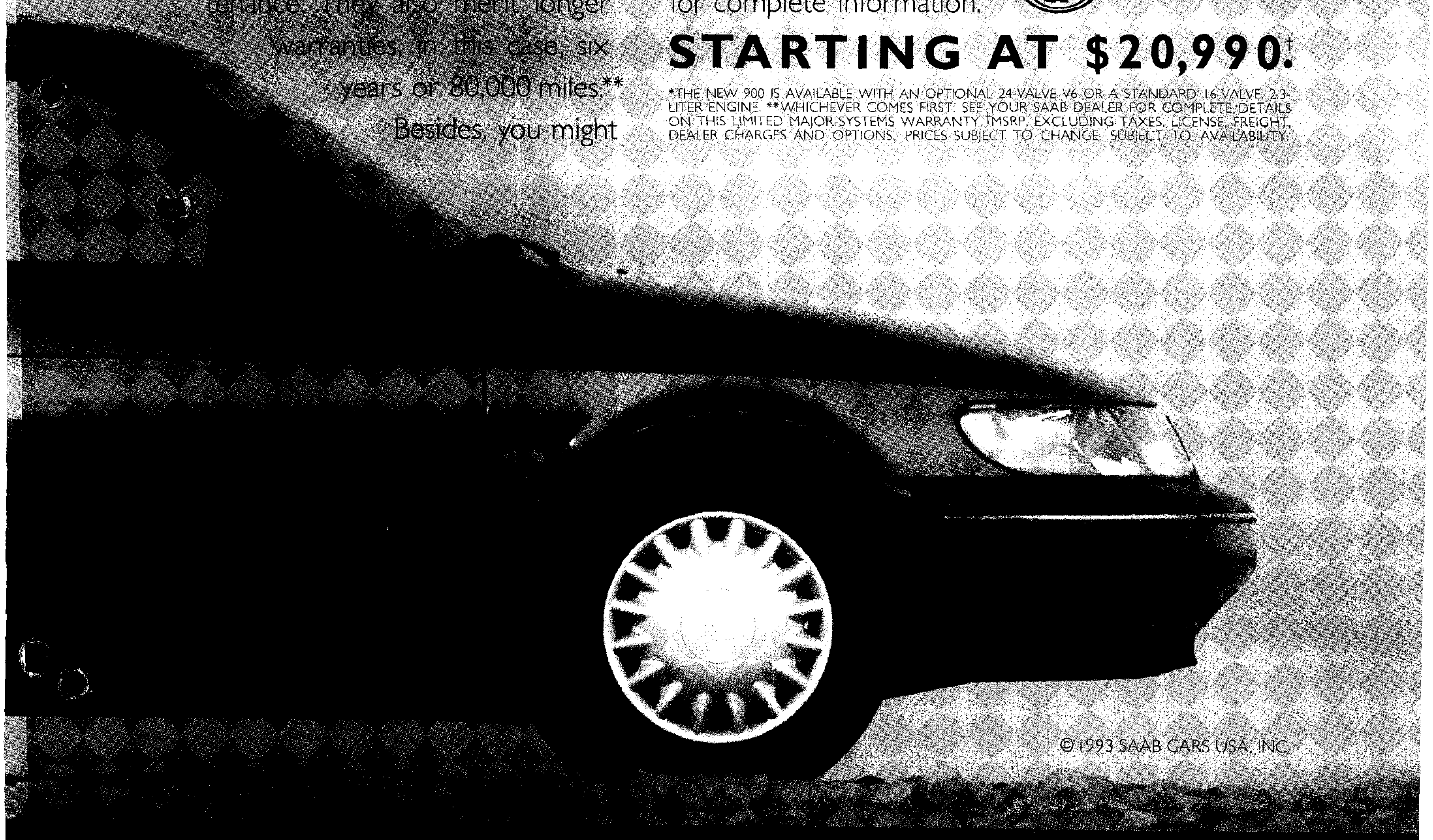

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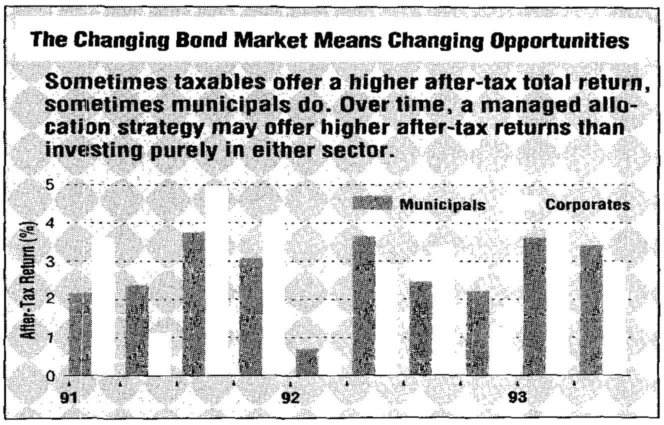

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NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Once you get past the rough bits here—the hordes of tourists, the cattle-car seating, the stiff prices—you're likely to find yourself face to face with some of the biggest names in jazz. Through Dec. 12: singer and human sound-effects machine **BOBBY MC FERRIN,** the one-voice orchestra behind "Don't Worry, Be Happy" (1988), one of the more irritating monster hits in recent memory. In general, McFerrin's vocal shenanigans range from the ridiculous to the sublime to the ostentatious. Dining.

ADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A venerable piano-and-bass preserve. A trio featuring **MIKE LE DONNE, PETER WASHINGTON,** and **KENNY WASHINGTON** appears through Dec. 11. Pianist LeDonne knows when to kick off his shoes and when not to: on back-tempo blues and leisurely ballads he takes all the time he needs; on bop dashes he's out of the gate without looking back. His rhythm mates, the brilliant Washingtons—bassist Peter and drummer Kenny (no relation)—generate the perfect groove. Beginning Dec. 13: **CHARLES THOMAS** and **RAY DRUMMOND.** Dining.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—A softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz grotto. Through Dec. 12: the **BILLY TAYLOR** trio. Taylor's piano playing mirrors his public persona—sturdy, erudite, resolutely mainstream; a no-nonsense approach. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Dining.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. The musicians set up in the dining room, a clubby-looking space with leather banquettes and well-preserved collectibles: Sunday *Herald Tribune* covers, First World War posters, Hirschfeld drawings. Up front at the bar, you can keep your eye on the musicians, the conversationalists, and sidewalk life. Pianist **BILL MAYS** and bassist **SEAN SMITH** team up through Dec. 11.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—The club most likely to feature an electric-rake player. Run by a couple of forward-looking Wisconsinites, the Knitting Factory books all manner of neo-this and post-that ensembles. The atmosphere is low-key, low-budget bohemian. The club continues its informal klezmer festival this week. On Dec. 10: the **PARADOX TRIO,** with Dave Douglas's Tiny Bell Trio. Matt Darriau, the point man for the Paradox Trio, plays a variety of instruments, including reeds, flutes, and gaida (a Bulgarian bagpipe), matched by the range of music the quartet (that's the paradox) plays. This hard-working crew makes joyful music with an edge, and it all happens—from rhythmic klezmer to offbeat Balkan tunes—with apparent ease. With the athletic Seido Salifoski on dümbeks and percussion, Rufus Cappadocia on electric cello, and Brad Schoeppach on guitar.

LA CAVE ON FIRST, 1125 First Ave., at 62nd St. (759-4011)—Though situated in the basement of an Upper East Side Mexican restaurant (Pancho Villa), this is an establishment worth checking out. There's nothing trendy or even distinguishing about it, and that may be the secret of its appeal. The entertainment varies, from tap dancing one night to jazz the next.

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—It may look like a plain old steak house, and the

RECORD STORE ARRIVALS

A highly selective list of new releases we're curious to hear.

E, "Broken Toy Shop" (Polydor).

DAVID BOWIE, "The Singles: 1969 to 1993 Featuring His Greatest Hits" (Rykodisc).

EURYTHMICS, "Live 1983-1989" (Arista).

YELLOWMAN, "A Man You Want" (Shanachie).

VICTORIA WILLIAMS, "Happy Come Home" (Geffen).

"JOHN MCLAUGHLIN PLAYS BILL EVANS" (Verve).

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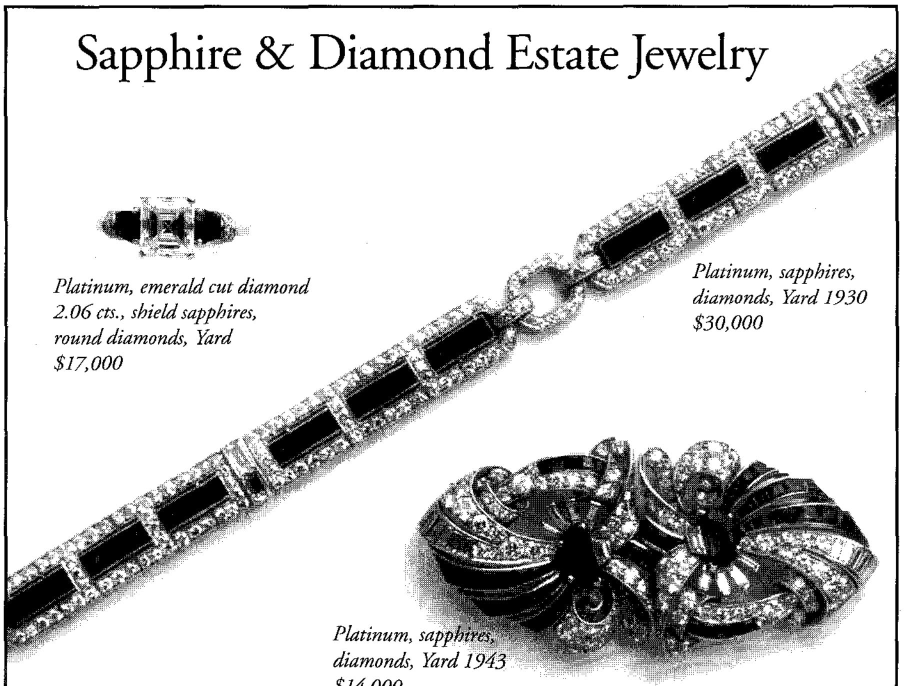

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photos on the walls may look like Sardi's castoffs, but in the back room you'll find swing bands, Dixieland combos, and couples who remember how to dance. Mondays belong to the Smith Street Society jazz band, Tuesdays to Jim Lawyer and his Bluebird Society orchestra, Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band, Fridays to Lew Anderson's big band and Sam Ulano and his Bourbon Street Swingers, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A pretty serious jazz shrine where you have to pass within inches of the stage to reach the rest rooms. The **ADAM HOLZMAN BAND** plays through Dec. 12. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

TIME CAFÉ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Hidden within this trendy restaurant is a two-story club called Fez. Upstairs is a sumptuous Moroccan bar and lounge. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is rather plain in comparison, but still a sleek and comfortable spot to take in a show. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** packs them in every Thursday. The fourteen-piece ensemble concentrates exclusively on the tricky, cacophonous work of its catalyst, Charles Mingus. Dining.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—On a beery strip of the Village where every day is spring break, this club offers three floors of fun. Since this makes for rather confusing traffic patterns, we recommend using the buddy system. In the downstairs room, which is as big and plain as a mess hall, **JOHN LURIE AND THE LOUNGE LIZARDS** play through Dec. 12. Lurie and the ever-evolving Lizards made their first New York appearance in more than a year at the Gate back in October. Their December run will feature some new material.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town that still looks, feels, and smells like a classic jazz club—subterranean, smoky, and thick with the spirits of past masters. Through Dec. 12: the **JACKIE MC LEAN** quintet. In the fifties, alto saxophonist McLean was a sideman on early Miles Davis sessions; by the sixties, players like the iconoclastic Ornette Coleman were working as sidemen on McLean's recordings. Having kept himself firmly in the middle of the fray for decades, McLean is now a compact compendium of modern jazz. His range makes the distinctions between bop, hard bop, and modal playing disappear. Beginning Dec. 14: the **ROY HARGROVE** quintet. Mondays are reserved for the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.**

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: a place where you'd go to eat even if there were no music. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. Through Dec. 11: **JOHN BUNCH, JAY LEONHART,** and **BUCKY PIZZARELLI.**

ROCK AND FOLK

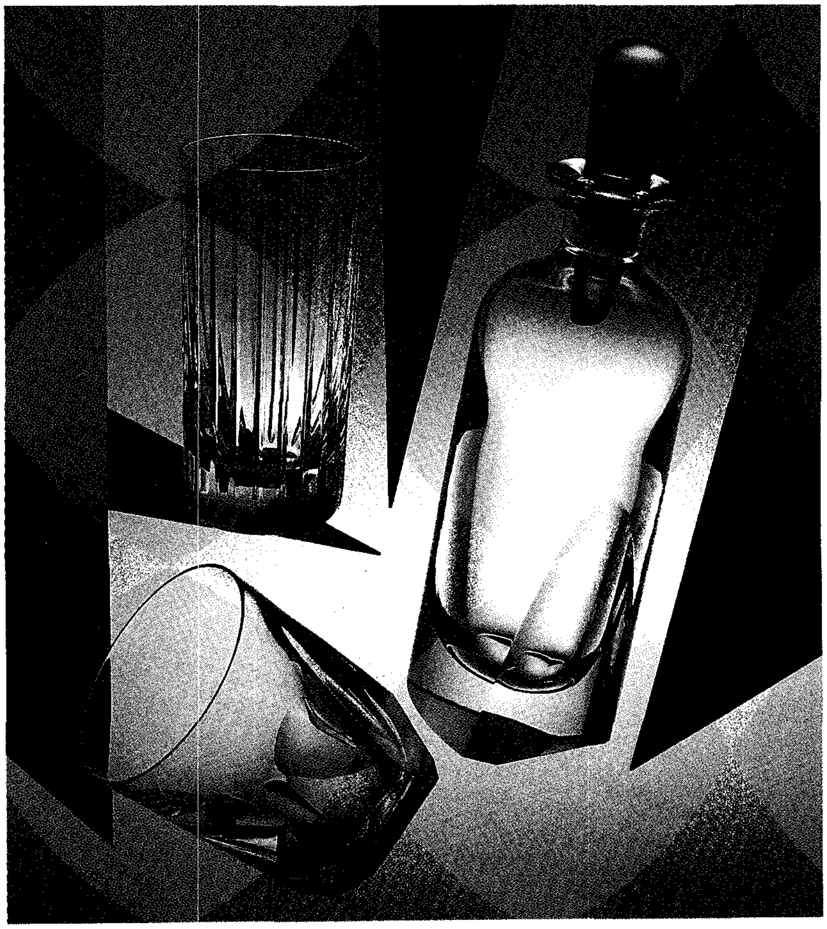
ACADEMY, 234 W. 43rd St.—A cozy former theater, situated a few doors away from Times Square, where techno and alternative-rock bands, among others, occasionally turn up. **PAUL WELLER** arrives on Dec. 11. Though only in his mid-thirties, Weller has been a fixture on the modern rock scene for some twenty years. As a young teen-ager, he formed and led the seminal punk-pop band the Jam; later he tried his hand at funkier, more sophisticated fare with Style Council. The singer's eponymous solo-début album, released last year, paid stylistic homage to the sweet seventies soul music that most of his punk peers either dissed or ignored. Weller's sophomore solo effort is due in March, and it's anyone's guess as to which musical pots he'll be dipping his spoon into this time. Maybe at this gig he'll offer a taste of his new stuff. **PAL SHAZAR** will open. On Dec. 13: **SEPULTURA** appears with **FUDGE TUNNEL,** a band whose sonic attack incorporates elements of hardcore punk, industrial music, and that nasty little hard-rock subgenre known as death metal. For concert information, call 249-8870.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—This big, airy folk-and-rock club used to be the site of a lot of music-industry bashes, but now it's an eclectic and hard-to-figure-out venue for the good, the bad, and (sometimes still) the great. **PAUL RODGERS AND COMPANY** appear on Dec. 9-10. Rodgers' soulful tenor was the chief asset of the seventies bands Bad Company and Free, and the saving grace (barely) of such ill-fated later projects as the Firm and the Law. This year, Rodgers has kept himself busy by paying homage to a pair of roots-rock legends: Muddy Waters, on a recently released tribute album, and Jimi Hendrix, on an EP of live covers released last month ("The Hendrix Set"). On Dec. 11: **BLUE RODEO,** with the **RHEOSTATICS.**

CAFÉ SIN-É, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—A small peach-walled storefront, Sin-é is usually given over to a young, earthy crowd that drinks Rolling Rock or espresso and waits for some Irish musician or other to blow in and play a set. Singer-songwriter **PAULA COLE** brings her acoustic guitar and enchanting voice to the club on Dec. 8 and Dec. 14.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Here's a depressing thought: CB's turns twenty this month—about the same age, give or take a few years, as most of its patrons in the club's late-seventies heyday, when it was America's headquarters for punk and New Wave. Among the bands that started here are the Ramones, Blondie, and Talking Heads, who immortalized this Bowery dive in "Life During Wartime." Throughout December, CB's tiny stage will be revisited by veterans of this era in rock history and by some of their successors. Those beloved postmodern nerds **THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS** play on Dec. 8, followed on Dec. 9 by the noisy guitar rock of the **MEAT PUPPETS** (whose new album, "Too High to Die," is due in January). On Dec. 10: the spooky, creepy, ominous rockabilly of **THE CRAMPS.** On Dec. 11: New York's answer to the Seattle sound, the heavy-metal hardcore band **HELMET,** will bring its squalling guitars to the celebration.

GRAND, 76 E. 13th St. (777-0600)—A cross between an old-fashioned split-level night club and a parking garage decorated for a senior prom. Despite the balloons and the candy-colored lights, this is a serious room for serious rock-and-rolling. You can either vibrate up front, near a wall-o'-speakers, or lounge around the bar in the back and follow the show on a video monitor. **WARREN HAYNES** appears on Dec. 8.



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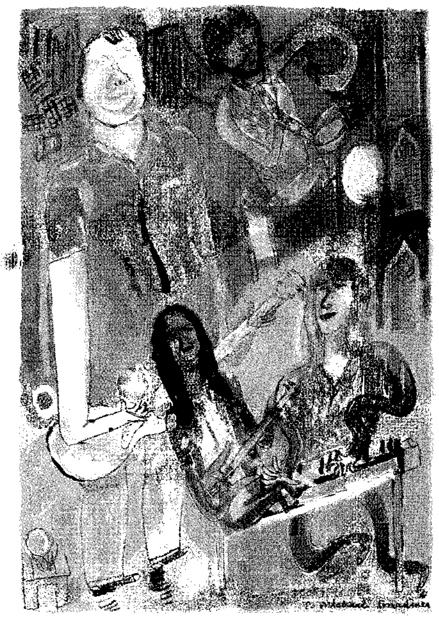
Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. On Dec. 8: **THE OCEAN BLUE** will showcase its inspired third album, "Beneath the Rhythm and Sound." The album's eleven songs balance a simultaneously upbeat and ethereal sound—a catchy mixture of the Housemartins and the Cocteau Twins. It's no mistake that the title of one of the songs, "Either/Or," was borrowed from Kierkegaard: many of the songs echo the existential themes of individual responsibility and choice. Only four years ago, the Ocean Blue garnered a loyal following with its first LP effort, and the new album proves that this twenty-something quartet from central Pennsylvania can satisfy its devotees without pandering to hard-edged trendiness. **ACID TEST** will open. On Dec. 9, look for **BIG HEAD TODD AND THE MONSTERS,** with **MICHELLE MALONE.**

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A two-tiered honky-tonk that looks as if it could have been the inspiration for the Hard Rock Café. (It wasn't, of course; money was.) Upstairs, there's a display of vintage Gibson guitars. Downstairs, in the dining room, there's a stage, a dance floor, and caricatures of musicians who have blown through over the years. Singer **BILLY VERA** appears on Dec. 11, with guests the **SYNDICATE OF SOUL** and **RED STRIPE.** Dining.



NRBQ in concert at St. Ann's Church.

T. MICHAEL GARDINER

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—The bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. On Dec. 8, the **MEAT PUPPETS** warm up for their CBGB anniversary gig (on Dec. 9), with guests Wake Ooloo. Social satirist **ERIC BOGOSIAN** tries out some new material on Dec. 9. On Dec. 10: **UNCLE TUPELO,** with **KEVIN SALEM.** On Dec. 11: **D GENERATION, MONSTERLAND,** and **BACKSEAT DRIVER.**

T[illegible]MPS, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Low lighting, muraled pillars, ironwork, a beautifully restored stamped-tin ceiling, and very little elbow room. Zydeco, soul, blues, and rock are the main orders of business here. **UNCLE TUPELO** stops by on Dec. 9, before heading out to Hoboken. Dining.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Home to an endless Summer of Love. Wetlands is a groovy, psychedelic, thoroughly Green night club. It is filled more or less nightly with young bands who like to play long, swirling jams and with throngs of young Deadheads who like to listen to them. On Dec. 8, an eclectic double bill: jazz-funk from the **DON BYRON** quintet, and psychedelic trance music from **HASSAN HAKMOUN ZAHAR,** a Moroccan band that recently appeared on Peter Gabriel's WOMAD tour.

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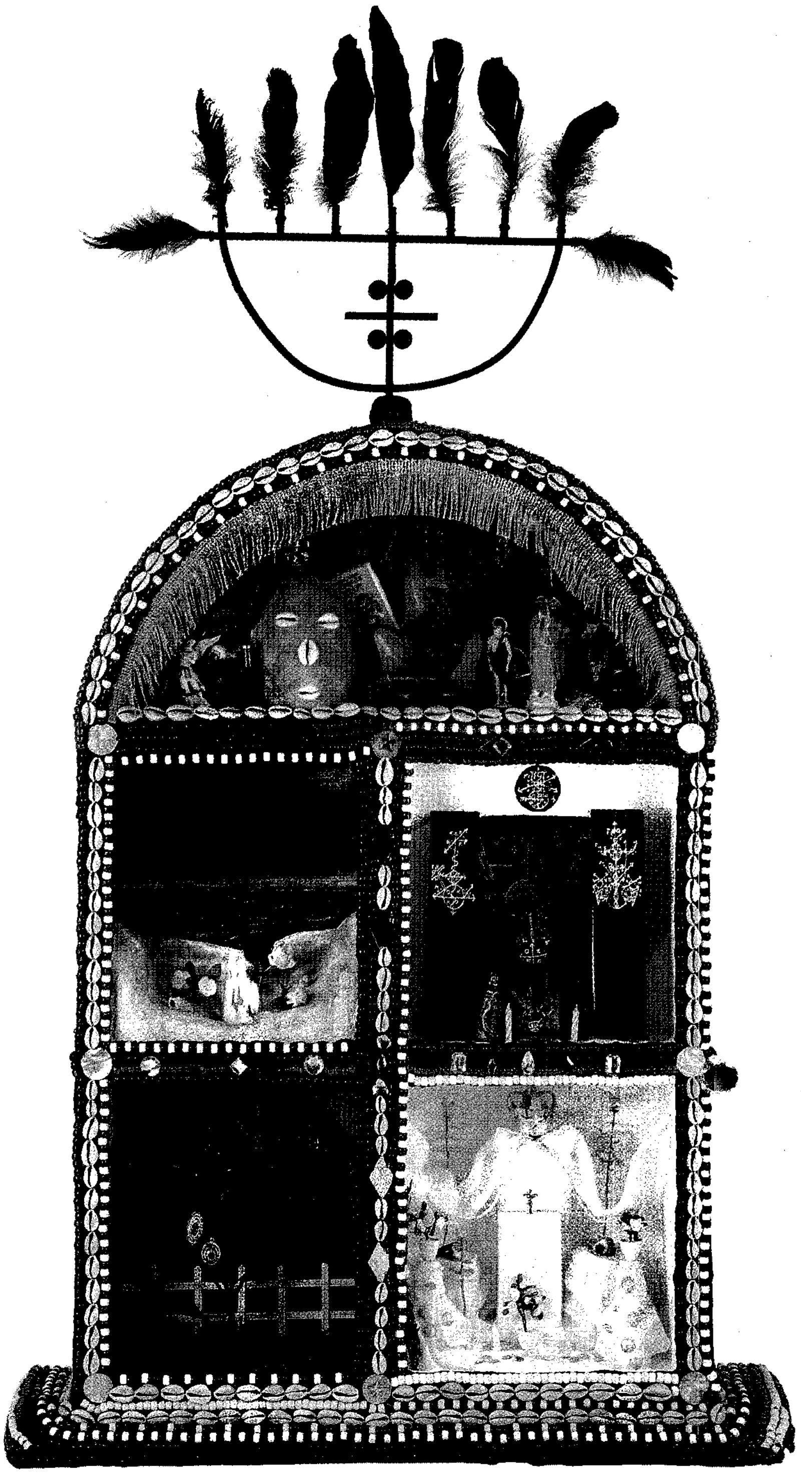
ART

The New Permanents

THE hype surrounding museums is typically a matter of blockbusters and retrospectives—the treasures of King Tut, the princely collections of Lichtenstein, Picasso, Matisse, Miró, etc.—but the heart of a great museum is its permanent collection. The works that are there, year in and year out, provide repeat visitors with familiar aesthetic landmarks, opportunities for meditation and free association, and the pleasure of near-ownership. Recently, both the Museum of Modern Art and the Met have undertaken major reinstallations, which, judging by the milling crowds, are generating some of the heat of a blockbuster. For those of us who winced at the drab, ticky-tacky look of the old André Meyer galleries, with their freestanding partitions supplementing the actual walls, the new galleries of Nineteenth-Century European Painting and Sculpture at the Met are especially welcome. Grand yet subdued, they provide an appropriate setting for what is now probably the finest collection of nineteenth-century French painting outside France.

The Whitney has also reinstalled its permanent collection. The imaginative design, by architects Steven Holl and Janet Cross, in collaboration with the permanent collection's curators, promotes the notion of a "classical spirit"—one of balance, symmetry, and harmony—coursing through the main currents of twentieth-century American art. The curators are stretching things by including Abstract Expressionists like de Kooning and Pollock and by juxtaposing Cy Twombly's elegant scribbling with the superficially similar graphic style of Bruce Nauman's "Raw War" (1971). But on the whole their comparisons are arresting, or at least formally striking, as in the combination of Alexander Archipenko's "Torso in Space" (1936), with its twisting, sinuous forms, and Robert Longo's convulsive "Cindy" (1984).



African altars at the Museum for African Art.

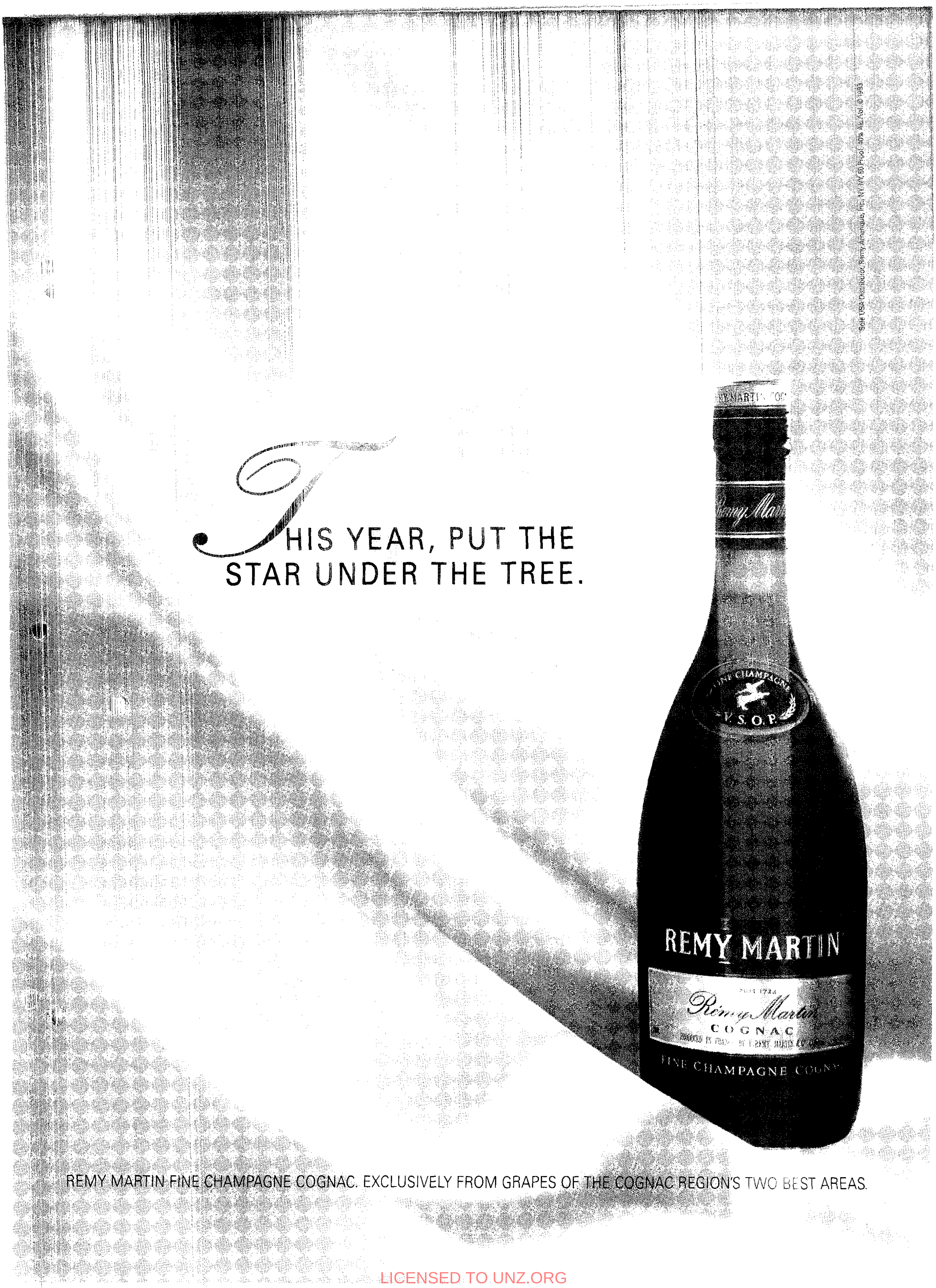
PABLO YGLESIAS

MUSEUMS

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—The Met's New Costume Institute presents an exhibition devoted to Diana Vreeland. With costumes, photographs, and other memorabilia, the show examines five decades of Vreeland's work, from her editorial influence at *Harper's Bazaar* (1936-62) and *Vogue* (1962-71) through her position as special consultant to the museum's original Costume Institute (1972-1989). Opens Dec. 9. . . . ¶ Eighteenth-century European decorative arts are on display in the Met's newly unveiled Florence Gould galleries: four new permanent exhibition rooms packed with more than two hundred paintings, tapestries, textiles, sculptures, and porcelain and glass pieces. . . . ¶ "The Gold of Meroe" features the jewelry of Queen Amanishakheto of Meroe, an ancient Nubian ruler. The Queen's cache includes more than two hundred pieces of colored glass, semiprecious stones, silver, and, of course, loads of gold. . . . ¶ "Elephant: The Animal and Its Ivory in African Art" includes seventy objects, from elephant masks to intricately carved tusks, representing more than twenty different indigenous cultures. . . . ¶ "Immortals and Sages: Fusuma Paintings from Ryoan-ji and the Lore of China in Japanese Art." . . ¶ Twenty years of Hudson River School works on paper. Through Dec. 26. . . . ¶ "Nineteenth-Century Portraits, Landscapes, and Nudes." Through Jan. 1. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—The current Miró retrospective celebrates the centennial of the Catalan master with some four hundred paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, and ceramics. Through Jan. 11. . . . ¶ Paintings by Robert Ryman, who for the past thirty years has specialized in white-on-white canvases. Through Jan. 1. . . . ¶ "Designed for Speed: Three Automobiles by Ferrari," MOMA's first automobile exhibition in more than fifteen years. . . . ¶ "New Photography" showcases four photographers whose work ranges from portraits of children in Knoxville, Tennessee, to images of squalor in Ukraine. Through Jan. 4. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday and Friday evenings until 8:30.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway—"Face of the Gods: Art and Altars of Africa and the African Americas." An intelligent and visually rich exhibition that focusses on the Yoruba and Kongo civilizations of West and Central Africa, respectively, tracing the dissemination and transformation of ritual forms in the Creole cultures of Haiti, Cuba, Brazil, and North America. Through Jan. 9. (Open Tuesdays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ART—Cont'd

through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, noon to 8; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—More than a hundred paintings by Pop master Roy Lichtenstein. Through Jan. 16. . . . ¶ Self-portraits by the photographer Robert Mapplethorpe (1946-89). Through Jan. 23. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—Eighty watercolors, made between 1911 and 1941, by Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944). . . . ¶ "Industrial Elegance," a lobby exhibition, salutes design excellence in everyday objects, from ice-cube makers to Frisbees. Through Jan. 23. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday through Saturday evenings until 8.)

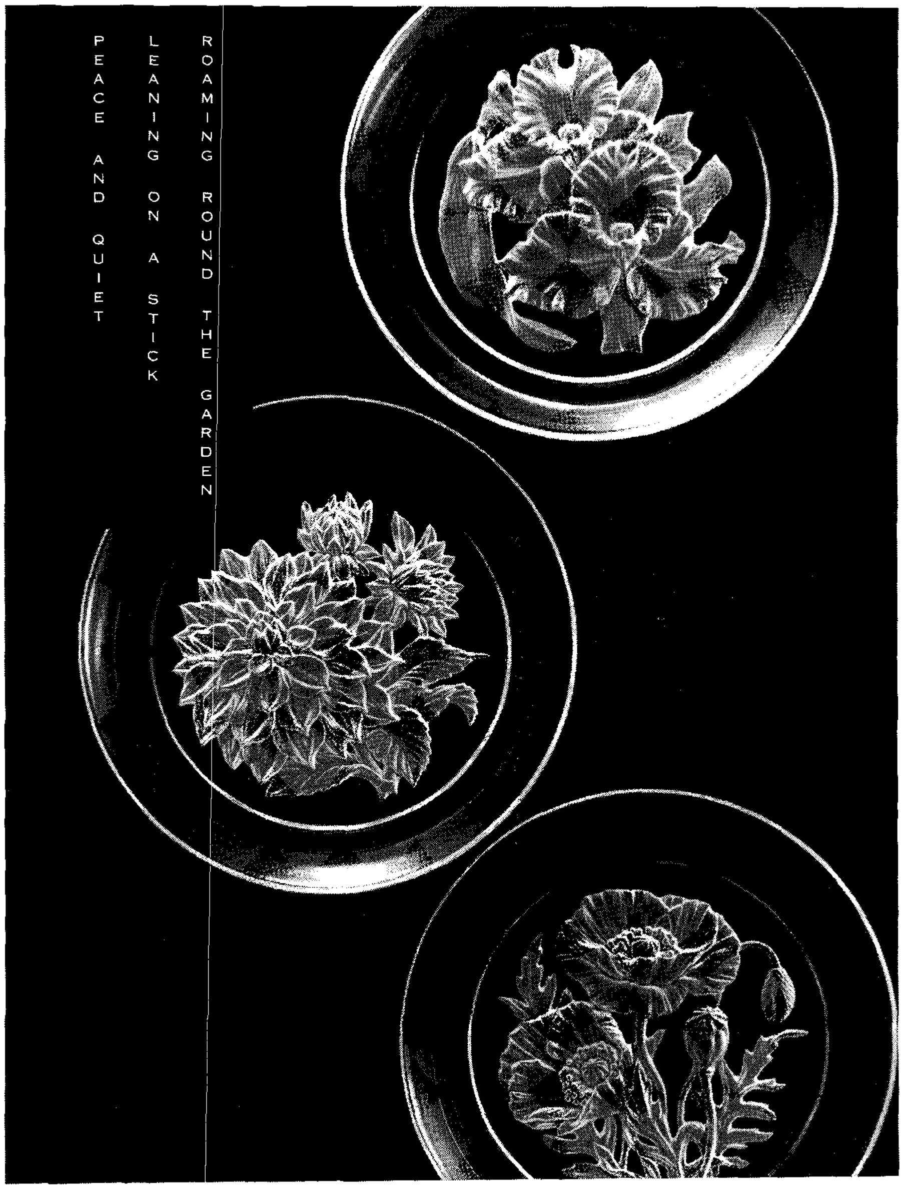
Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—More than a hundred and sixty paintings, sculptures, drawings, and site-specific installations by Mike Kelley. . . . ¶ "Betrothals," three important late canvases and related studies by Arshile Gorky (1904-48). Through Jan. 9. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Two exhibitions that focus on lesser-known locales and conditions in Cuba and Antarctica via photographs, drawings, biological specimens, and dioramas. Through Jan. 2. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—The museum reopens its renovated West Wing with a retrospective of works by internationally acclaimed architect Arata Isozaki, including models, sketches, silk-screen prints, drawings, and computer renderings. . . . ¶ Photographs by Consuelo Kanaga (1894-1978). (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Mechanical Brides: Women and Machines from Home to Office" examines the traditional link between "women's work" and home and office appliances. Through Jan. 2. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"French Master Drawings" assembles a hundred and twenty-five works from the fourteenth century through the nineteenth. Through Jan. 2. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)



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New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"The Dead Sea Scrolls: Ancient Civilization / Modern Scholarship." Twelve Scrolls are on display, along with related artifacts, models, and maps, on loan from the Israel Antiquities Authority. Through Jan. 8. . . . ¶ An exhibition of prints and illustrated books by more than fifty contemporary artists. (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Kiki Smith—Glitter and Grand Guignol from an artist riding the crest of body-conscious art. Smith traffics in macabre whimsy in this show, bedizening one gallery wall with winged fairies and dressing up the entrance with a chandelier that wouldn't be out of place in Castle Dracula. The artist reserves her most inspired grisly effects for statues of women. In "Daphne" she renders a woman's body in plaster, with branches of blue glass exploding from the head and limbs—a treatment of a classical theme owing more to David Cronenberg than to Ovid. A bronze-and-silver statue of the Virgin Mary portrays her stripped of her skin. "Lot's Wife" is made of plaster and salt, a testament to Smith's visionary literal-mindedness. Through Dec. 23. (Fawbush, 76 Grand St.)

Mel Bochner—Recent paintings and sculptures by a hard-core first-generation Conceptualist. The new works build on ideas initially investigated by the artist in the late sixties and early seventies, about the structure of vision and the nature of sculpture. Bochner's large paintings create conflicting perspectival illusions, as cubic shapes swirl vertiginously around a literally empty center—an aperture revealing the white gallery wall itself. The artist has also installed several floor sculptures based on his early seventies "Theory of Sculpture," in which dense conceptual problems were adumbrated with the simplest material means. In his re-creations, Bochner tarts up the old works nicely, replacing the pebbles of the original series with shards of electric-blue slag glass. Through Dec. 18. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

Joan Miró—Seven bulky, hulking pieces, including "Personnage," which resembles a swollen, abstract bronze Snoopy, in a knockout show called "Monumental Sculpture." Through Jan. 8. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

Massimo Antonaci—A show of three-dimensional objects with a spiritual theme. Through Dec. 23. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

Donald Baechler—Seven new paintings—a thumb, a hand, and five flowers—on distressed tarps, as well as an engaging totem sculpture and a suite of fourteen large floral drawings on paper. Through Dec. 23. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960-88)—Paintings from the mid-eighties. Through Jan. 8. (Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St.)

Ted Byfield and Lincoln Tobier—"Cop Sculpture," two installations that incorporate newspaper photographs of contraband seized by law-enforcement agencies. Through Dec. 31. (Hearn, 39 Wooster St., and American Fine Arts, 22 Wooster St.)

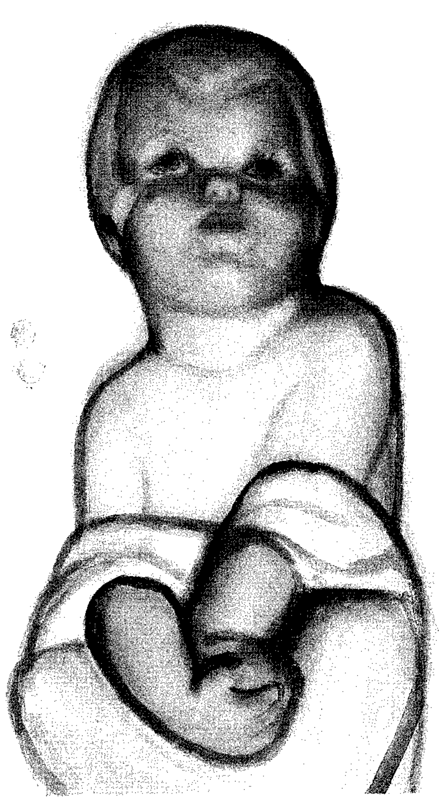
Gotscho—Bridal gowns and tuxedos as sculptural objects, by a French artist. Through Jan. 8. (Klagsbrun, 51 Greene St.)

Michael Gregory—Abstractions of rosebushes and a series of octopus paintings resembling Byzantine architectural tracery. Through Jan. 19. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Clinton Hill—Multicolored geometric wood constructions. Through Jan. 29. (Zarre, 48 Greene St. . . . **note:** A group show, "Thru Thick & Thin," features Doug Ohlson, Marjorie Strider, and Dan Wofford.)

Bill Jensen—Abstract paintings with dense arrangements of interacting shapes suggestive of landscapes or still-lifes. Through Dec. 23. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Anish Kapoor—Freestanding pieces of pocked, etched sandstone. Through Jan. 29. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)



Self-portrait by Ellen Phelan (Toll).

Konrad Klapheck—Fifteen years' worth of paintings and drawings, dating from 1978 to the present. Through Dec. 22. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

Leslie Lerner—Narrative works, with glazed surfaces reminiscent of Renaissance paintings, from the artist's "My Life in France" series. Through Dec. 30. (Stephen Rosenberg, 115 Wooster St.)

Norman Lewis (1909-79)—Thirty abstract works on paper from the forties, fifties, and sixties. Through Jan. 15. (Berman-Daferner, 568 Broadway.)

Robert Longo—"Killing Time," a striking show of twenty abstract collages. Through Dec. 18. (Prats, 568 Broadway.)

Ellen Phelan—Phelan is, on the surface, a traditional artist whose most obvious concerns are for verisimilitude, nuance, and technique, but her portraits of dolls are poetic ruminations, elegiac in tone. Her toy subjects—whether Disneyesque, Victorian, or Betty Boopish—seem to float against murky backgrounds, as if in amber. Through Jan. 8. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Ellen Rothenberg—"Partial Index," a sculptural installation relating to the Anne Frank diaries. Through Feb. 19. (Kent, 67 Prince St. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.)

Cary Smith—Geometric abstractions. Through Jan. 15. (Ala, 560 Broadway.)

Norman Toynton—Abstract oils on pegboard, in a triptych form. Through Dec. 30. (Stux, 163 Mercer St.)

Robert Wilson—A video adaptation of the murder scene from his 1970 theatre piece, "Deafman Glance." Through Dec. 23. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Richard Yarde—Watercolors with sparse imagery. Through Jan. 4. (Kelly, 591 Broadway.)

"Poverty Pop"—Work by artists who use found materials. Through Jan. 8. (Exit Art, 548 Broadway.)

"Twenty-five Years"—Works from the seventies and eighties by Jennifer Bartlett, Peter Campus, and Alan Shields, among others. Through Dec. 18. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

UPTOWN

John McLaughlin (1898-1976)—Geometric abstractions from 1946 to 1976 by an influential West Coast artist. Opens Dec. 10. Through Jan. 8. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Lucio Muñoz—Landscape-based abstractions, in mixed mediums on wood. Opens Dec. 8. Through Jan. 8. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

"New Works"—William Garbe, Jane Kaplowitz, Robert Zakanitch, and others. Opens Dec. 14. Through Jan. 29. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

•

John Storrs (1885-1956) / **Sylvia Wald**—Sculptures and works on paper by an American student of Rodin who later fell under the spell of the Cubist, Futurist, and Russian Constructivist avant-gardes. Assimilating these styles and drawing inspiration variously from ancient Egyptian art and architecture, Native American crafts, Frank Lloyd Wright, and the skyscrapers of New York, Storrs was a proficient but at times almost too eclectic artist. Some of his more linear, plainly representational sculptures—like "Winged Horse," circa 1919, and "Ceres," circa 1929—bring to mind the work of Paul Manship. They wouldn't look at all out of place among the decorative cornices and entablatures of Rockefeller Center. / Upstairs is a group of works on paper and one dead-on-the-wall painting by an artist who seems to have hit her stride during the nineteen-fifties, when she abandoned a lifeless Ben Shahnesque representational style in favor of the innovations of the New York School. Thin washes of color combined with scribbled marks call to mind both Far Eastern painting and Cy Twombly. Some of the best screen prints here—for example, "Tundra Clouds" (1950)—look like premonitions of the color-field painting that would emerge in the next decade. Through Jan. 8. (Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St.)

"Roma-New York: 1948-64"—This show charts the interrelationship between the Eternal City and the postwar art capital, and traces the gradual emergence of an autonomous Italian avant-garde. Waning Abstract Expressionism and nascent Pop are the predominant forces. On the American side, there are important paintings by Franz Kline, Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko, and Cy Twombly, as well as a suite of Joseph Cornellesque collages by Robert Rauschenberg, from 1952. Among the Italians, Salvatore Scarpitta's mummified canvas, "Gomma Arabica" (1958), and Mimmo Rotella's proto-Pop "La Tigre" and "Sua Maestá la Regina," both from 1962, stand out. Lucio Fontana and Piero Manzoni, the two most influential artists of this period, are strangely absent. Through Jan. 10. (Murray & Isabella Rayburn Foundation, 41 E. 57th St.)

George Bellows (1882-1925)—Thirty paintings, from the early "Excavation at Night" (1908) to "Two Women," which was done near the end of the artist's life; also, a set of his boxing prints. Through Jan. 15. (Berry-Hill, 11 E. 70th St. Open Mondays.)

Josef Albers (1888-1976)—Large "Homage to the Square" paintings from the years 1962 to 1967. Through Dec. 23. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Carol Anthony—Small-scale interiors reflecting the atmosphere of Santa Fe, where the artist has been living for the past two years. Through Dec. 23. (Davidson, 41 E. 57th St.)

Stanley Boxer—Abstract paintings that incorporate gravel and wood chips. Through Dec. 11. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Francesco Clemente—Large panel paintings with dark, mysterious imagery. Through Jan. 8. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Willem de Kooning—Drawings that span the artist's entire career, from delicate pencil works of the late nineteen-twenties through works from the nineteen-fifties that bear unusual resemblances to the styles of other artists. Through Dec. 31. (Mathes, 41 E. 57th St.)

Lucian Freud—Early paintings, drawings, and etchings, among them "The Painter's Room" (1943), "Girl with a Kitten" (1947), and "Hotel Bedroom" (1954). Through Jan. 8. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

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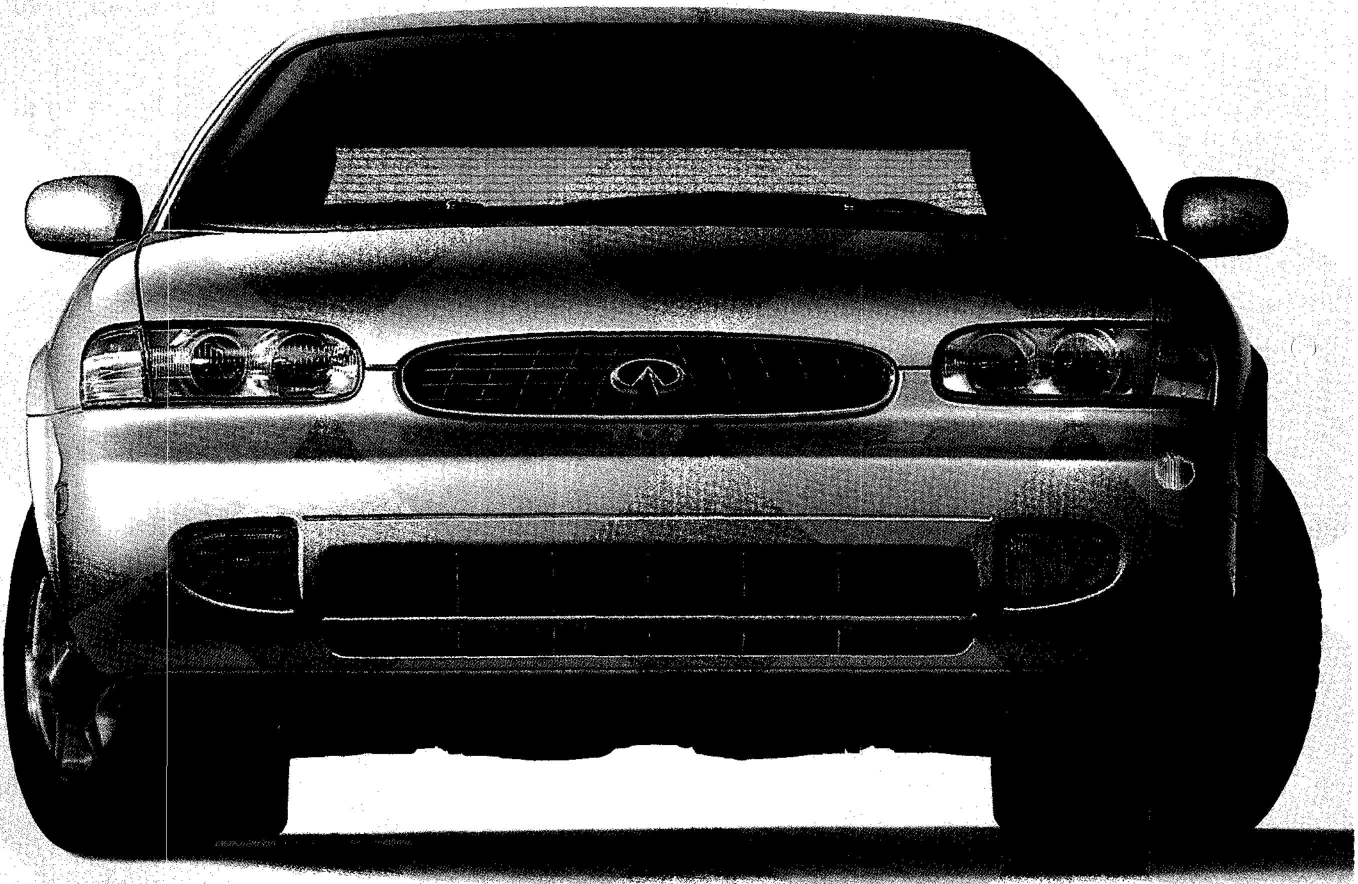

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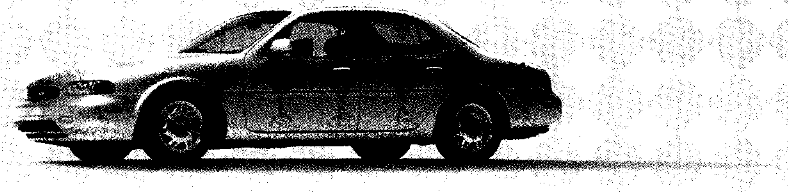

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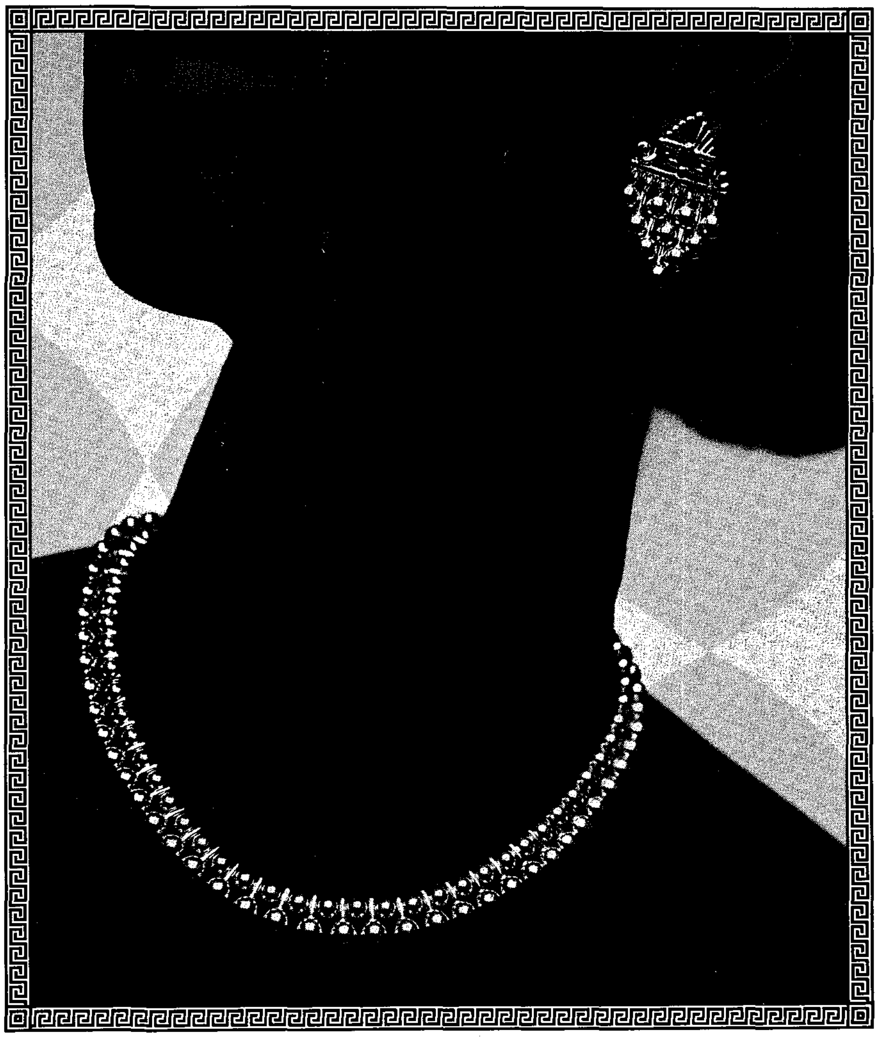

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ART—Cont'd

Gregory Gillespie—Paintings by a hyperrealist artist whose works sometimes verge on trompe-l'oeil. Through Jan. 22. (Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Howard Hodgkin—Brilliantly colored, unusually large (for this artist) paintings, executed in oil on wood. Through Jan. 15. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

Jannis Kounellis—A Greek-born artist who lives in Rome, showing steel panels with burlap. Through Dec. 31. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Robert Kulicke—Paintings of pears, white roses, tomatoes, and wildflowers, in frames designed and built by the artist. Through Dec. 31. (Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St.)

Jacob Lawrence—Lawrence's first New York show in many years includes four new works, three of them based on images of manual labor. Through Jan. 15. (Midtown Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Paul Manes—A dozen paintings revealing an evolution from circular abstractions to figuration, using the repeated image of a bowl. Through Jan. 1. (Marisa Del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

Rufino Tamayo (1899-1991)—Works from the thirties through the eighties by this renowned Mexican artist. Through Dec. 18. (Martin, 23 E. 73rd St.)

"African-American Art: Twentieth-Century Masterworks"—Paintings and sculptures from 1910 to 1965, ranging in style from realism to abstraction. Among the artists are Benny Andrews, Elizabeth Catlett, and Norman Lewis. Through Feb. 12. (Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St.)

"Mostly Maine"—Works by part-time-resident artists (Rudy Burckhardt, Henry Finkelstein, Jeremy Foss, and Kathryn Wall) and a one-time resident (Fairfield Porter). Through Jan. 4. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

"Symbolism and the Austrian Avant-Garde"—Works by James Ensor, Max Klinger, Odilon Redon, and others, juxtaposed with the works of such Austrian painters as Oskar Kokoschka, Gustav Klimt, and Egon Schiele. Through Jan. 8. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Wonderful Wizard—Douglas and David Greene, twins who grew up in Florida, couldn't seem to put away childish things—until now. Enamored of anything connected with "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," which their mother read to them as kids, they became avid collectors of Oziana and, eventually, charter members of the International Wizard of Oz Club. On Dec. 9 at 2 (preview Dec. 8), the Greene collection will go on the block at Swann Galleries (104 E. 25th St.). To give you some idea of the extent of their collection, it includes Alexander Volkov's rare 1939 Russian adaptation, "The Wizard of the Emerald City" (estimate: $600-$900). (For information, call 254-4710.)

New York Armory Christmas Antiques Show—If someone on your list would appreciate an Edwardian necklace or a Tiffany toiletry set, nip into this traditional holiday exposition. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 67th St. Dec. 9, from 4 to 9; Dec. 10-11, from noon to 9; and Dec. 12, from noon to 6.)

Reading Matter—The perfect Christmas gift: a first edition of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," inscribed by the author to his sister Letitia on the Friday before Christmas in 1843 (estimate: $50,000-$70,000). It is one the highlights in the fine-books-and-manuscripts sale on Dec. 10 at 10:15. (Sotheby's, York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7176.)

Fallout from Space—Sotheby's senior vice-president David Redden, picking up on the Russians' desire to market space satellites in the West, sought out material from their space program. Not something for everybody, perhaps, but it's for sale on Dec. 11 at 10. Among the more useful items is Yuri Gagarin's C.K. 1 space suit, in which he trained for the first human space flight (estimate: $100,000-$150,000). (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7176.)

Vintage Cars—Take the subway to the Dec. 11 Guernsey auction at Pier 88 (Twelfth Ave. at 48th St.), because you may be driving home in one of the hundred and seventy-five vintage motorcars on sale. Not strictly an élitist event, the auction offers a wide range of cars, from a 1937 Mercedes-Benz unrestored convertible (estimate: $5,000) to a 1941 Chrysler Thunderbolt (estimate: $800,000-$1,000,000). (Preview Dec. 10, from 9 to 9, and on the day of the sale, from 8 A.M.; sale at 10 A.M.)

Bids from Underground—Set aside a token for the ride home from the auction at the New York Transit Museum on Dec. 11 at 5, because you may have spent all your money on a working subway car, an "iron maiden" turnstile, a subway-station chewing-gum vending machine, or other underground collectibles. Suggested opening bids range from $25 to $3,000. (Boerum Pl. and Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn. For information, call 1-718 330-3063.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

The Devil's Due

In the world of images, creatures who are supposed to be devils are usually given pitchforks and horns, not wings. So there is something especially meaningful about the fact that the new wing at the Guggenheim Museum has been named the Robert Mapplethorpe Gallery. This immortalizing of the late photographer is a vivid example of a perennial process in art: the transition from shock and outrage to acceptance and appreciation.

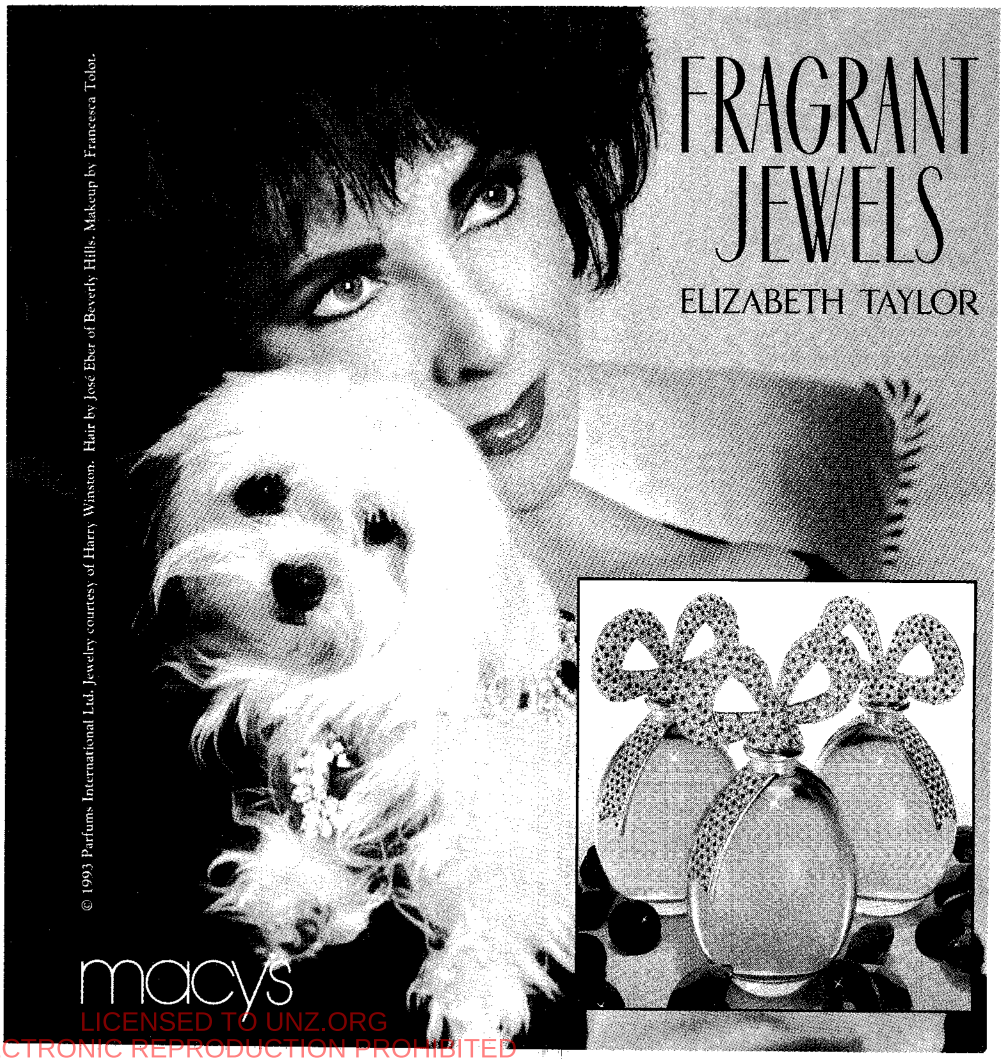
Mapplethorpe's controversial photographs are now hanging in an installation of great, uncensored dignity. The inaugural show in the new wing consists of self-portraits by the photographer, who not only presented himself as a devil in one of his most famous shots but whose images were attacked as a force of evil by congressmen, conservative groups, and even some art critics. The pictures themselves begin with his first Polaroids, from the early seventies, and end with the unashamed self-portraits, with the signs of AIDS there for all to see, from the last few months of his life. It is photography at its most personal and photography at its most profound: as a medium that can record the biggest changes in the world and has the power to change consciousness.

Joseph Sudek (1896-1976)—"Poetic Images" features this Czech-born photographer's pigment prints and advertising images from the twenties through the fifties. Through Jan. 8. (Sander, 19 E. 76th St.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Mexico Through Foreign Eyes" features more than two hundred photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson, Paul Strand, and others. Through Dec. 12. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"Iterations: The New Image," an exhibition of computer-generated photography. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the American Museum of Natural History, and the Brooklyn Museum.)



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CLASSICAL MUSIC

Feast or Famine

For a composer whose reputation has waxed and waned over the past century and a half, Hector Berlioz is having a good month. Following an absence of six years, his oratorio "L'Enfance du Christ" resurfaces in town on December 12, when Roger Norrington leads the Orchestra of St. Luke's, the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, and distinguished soloists in a performance at Avery Fisher Hall. Four days later, the Metropolitan Opera dusts off its twenty-year-old production of the composer's magnum opus, "Les Troyens," which has not been seen for a decade.

Vicissitudes have always stalked Berlioz' fortunes, at least outside of France. Entire seasons go by during which Berlioz fanatics—and his enthusiasts tend to be just that—must settle for little more than the occasional "Symphonie Fantastique"; and then, without warning, their man suddenly comes back into vogue. Of course, the composer sometimes made it difficult for his champions to present his works: "Les Troyens," for example, unrolls spaciously over five hours and requires a cast with monumental powers of endurance (which it seems the Met may provide). The recent absence of "L'Enfance du Christ" is harder to explain. It lasts a mere ninety minutes and makes far less extravagant demands as it chronicles the post-Christmas story of Herod's wrath and the Holy Family's flight into Egypt. It seems almost cinematic in its dramatic method, presenting its action through a striking succession of tableaux rather than as a linear narrative. Had Berlioz lived a century later, he surely would have been summoned to the offices of the movie moguls and rubbed elbows in the corridors with Max Steiner and Bernard Herrmann. Just think: the vivid musical imagery of "L'Enfance du Christ" might have appeared as a hot Hollywood soundtrack.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; and for the Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St., 570-3949.)

HOLIDAY MUSIC

HANDEL'S "MESSIAH"—Dec. 8 at 7: Richard Westenburg directs a sing-along of the Christmas portion, with several soloists, and with Terence J. Flanagan at the organ. (Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, Fifth Ave. at 55th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Dec. 8 at 8: Douglas Anderson directs a sing-along, with the BMCC Downtown Symphony. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Dec. 10 and Dec. 12 at 7:30: Kyler Brown directs the Virgin Consort (a chamber choir) in a "Messiah" that replicates the forces and program order of the oratorio's first London performance, in 1743. Soloists are early-music superstar soprano Emma Kirkby

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(in her first New York "Messiah"), contralto Karen Clark Young, tenor Timothy Evans, and bass-baritone Michael Dean. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. 921-2939.) . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 4: Stephen Kushner directs a sing-along of Parts One and Two. (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St., with a carillon recital by Joseph Clair Davis preceding, at 3. Admission by contribution.) . . . ¶ Stephen Hamilton directs the Holy Trinity Choir and soloists in the Christmas portion. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. 289-4100. Dec. 12 at 5.) . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 7:30: Musica Viva's annual sing-along, with Walter Klauss directing the choir, the audience, soloists, and an orchestra. (All Souls Unitarian Church, Lexington Ave. at 80th St. 794-3646.) . . . ¶ Martin Josman directs the National Chorale. (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 14 at 8.) . . . ¶ Dec. 14 and Dec. 16 at 7:30: Gerre Hancock directs the St. Thomas Choir and the Concert Royal period-instrument orchestra, with soprano Christine Brandes, countertenor Drew Minter, tenor Gregory Carder, and baritone Peter Cutlip. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. 757-7013, ext. 3003.)

BRANDENBURG BINGES—Through a curious twist of taste and fate, Bach's six "Brandenburg" Concertos have emerged as holiday fare; and how better to bring the year to a close? The Cosmopolitan Chamber Ensemble embarks on a three-Sunday survey—two concertos per week—by playing the Concertos No. 1 and No. 2. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. Dec. 12 at 11:30 A.M. Admission is free, but call 1-718 885-2478 to reserve a seat. . . . Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Dec. 12 at 6 and 8. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat.) . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 5 and Dec. 14 at 7:30: The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center plays the whole set both nights. (Alice Tully Hall.)

ST. CECILIA CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA—David Randolph directs Bach's "Christmas Oratorio," with soprano Louise Wohlafka, mezzo-soprano Janice Meyerson, tenor Grayson Hirst, and bass Michael Burt. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 9 at 8.)

NEW YORK POPS "HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR"—Skitch Henderson serves up lighter festive fare, with the Fort Worth–Texas Christian University Symphonic Choir. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Dec. 10 at 8 and Dec. 11 at 2 and 8.)

DESSOFF CHOIRS—Amy Kaiser directs seasonal works by Britten ("A Boy Was Born"), Brahms, and American composers William Billings and Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, as well as sing-along carols. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Dec. 10-11 at 8. For information about tickets, call 935-2551.)

CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS—Gail Archer directs the Barnard-Columbia Chorus and the St. Paul's Chapel Baroque Orchestra in a candlelight concert of music by Monteverdi and Bach (including excerpts from the "Christmas Oratorio" and the B-Minor Mass), with soloists Barbara Shirvis (soprano), Jennifer Lane (mezzo-soprano), James Russell (tenor), and John Kramer (bass). (St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University; enter at Broadway and 116th St. 854-1540. Dec. 10-11 at 8.)

NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS—Clara Longstreth directs works by two Bachs (Johann Sebastian and Johann Christoph Friedrich), Daniel Pinkham (his "Christmas Cantata"), and others. (St. Ignatius' Episcopal Church, West End Ave. at 87th St. Dec. 10 at 8 and Dec. 12 at 4, with a benefit carolling party following the Sunday performance. For information about tickets, call 749-4650.)

LITTLE ORCHESTRA SOCIETY AND METROPOLITAN SINGERS/GREEK CHORAL SOCIETY—Dino Anagnost directs a candlelight Christmas concert that includes a Haydn "Te Deum," Elgar's "The Snow," and carols. (Holy Trinity Cathedral, 319 E. 74th St. Dec. 11 at 7. For information about tickets, call 704-2100.)

"L'ENFANCE DU CHRIST"—Berlioz' beloved oratorio, far less frequently heard than in former times, is performed by the Orchestra of St. Luke's, the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, and soloists Lorraine Hunt (mezzo-soprano), John Aler (tenor), Sanford Sylvan (baritone), and John Cheek (bass-baritone). Roger Norrington conducts. (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 12 at 2.)

THE SIXTEEN—Harry Christophers directs his fourteen superbly synchronized singers (plus a lutenist) in their first New York appearance, performing English Renaissance Christmas music by John Sheppard, Richard Pygott, Tallis, and others. Presented by Music Before 1800. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 666-0675. Dec. 12 at 4.)

CHANTICLEER—A wide-ranging holiday program by this men's a-cappella chamber choir. (Medieval Sculpture Hall, Metropolitan Museum. Dec. 12 at 6:30 and 8:30.)

WESTERN WIND VOCAL ENSEMBLE—In their annual presentation of "The Hanukkah Story"; with narrator Eli Wallach. (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 12 at 7.)

VIENNA CHOIR BOYS—The well-scrubbed lads provide their annual dose of seasonal Gemütlichkeit for sweet-toothed music lovers; with the Chorus Viennensis and the Brandenburg Collegium. This year's program is more substantial than many in the past; it includes Mozart's "Coronation" Mass and Bach's "Magnificat," Third Orchestral Suite, and Fifth "Brandenburg" Concerto. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 12 at 7:30.)

RIVERSIDE CHAMBER CHOIR AND THE AULOS ENSEMBLE—A period-instrument chamber ensemble joins the choir in a program that includes music by Bach, Britten ("A Ceremony of Carols"), Vivaldi, and Rameau; Arlan Sunnarborg directs. (Medieval Sculpture Hall, Metropolitan Museum. Dec. 13 at 6:30 and 8:30.)

AHMET GÖRGÜN

Leon Bates at the Miller Theatre.

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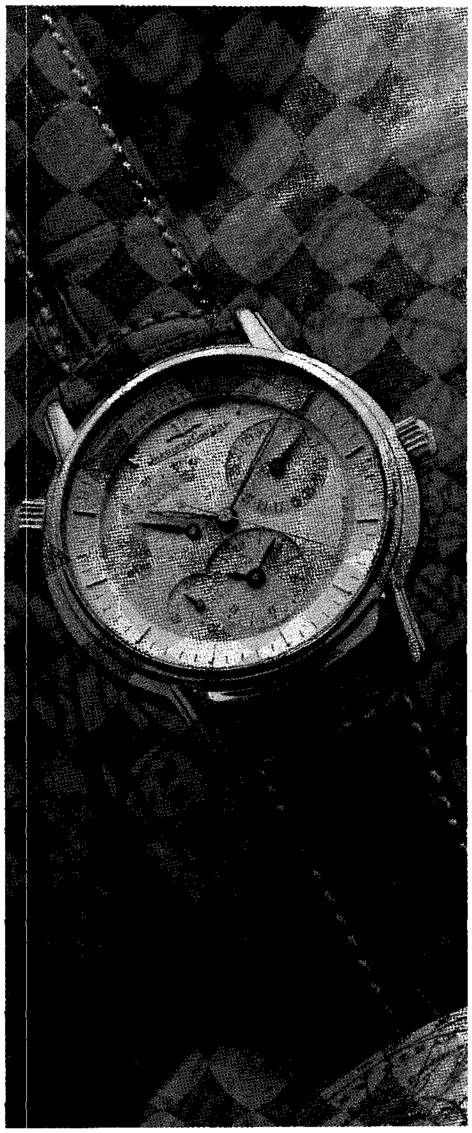

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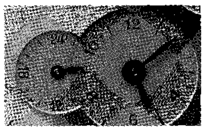

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OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**RUSALKA,** by Dvořák, with Gabriela Beňačková, Janis Martin, Stefania Toczyska, Ben Heppner, and Sergei Koptchak; conducted by John Fiore. (Dec. 8 at 8 and Dec. 11 at 1:30.) . . . **LA BOHÈME,** with Angela Gheorghiu, Carol Neblett, Franco Farina, Christopher Robertson; Carlo Rizzi. (Dec. 9 and Dec. 13 at 8.) . . . **FIDELIO,** with Carol Yahr, Helen Donath, William Johns, Michael Schade, Ekkehard Wlaschiha, and Jan-Hendrik Rootering; Hermann Michael. (Dec. 10 at 8.) . . . **I LOMBARDI,** by Verdi, with Aprile Millo, Luciano Pavarotti, Bruno Beccaria, and Samuel Ramey; James Levine. (Dec. 11 and Dec. [illegible] at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC OPERA THEATRE—Presenting a Kurt Weill double bill: the "Mahagonny Songspiel" (with Brecht's original text, which mixes German and English) and "The Tsar Has His Photograph Taken" (in Lionel Salter's English translation of Georg Kaiser's original libretto); fully staged, with David Gilbert conducting. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. 749-2802, ext. 428. Dec. 8 and Dec. 10 at 8, and Dec. 12 at 2:30. . . . **NOTE:** Stage director Rhoda Levine will offer pre-performance observations, on Dec. 8 at 6:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Kurt Masur conducts the première of Bernard Rands' ". . . where the murmurs die . . . ," Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3 (with Evgeny Kissin), and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6. (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 9-11 at 8.)

JUILLIARD ORCHESTRA—Stanislaw Skrowaczewski conducts Brahms' Symphony No. 3, Shostakovich's Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Anna Rabinova), and Stravinsky's "Firebird" Suite (1919). (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 8 at 8.)

RIVERSIDE SYMPHONY—One hopes Elliott Carter doesn't overdo it when he celebrates his eighty-fifth birthday on Dec. 11, because he's expected the following afternoon to share his thoughts on his daunting Oboe Concerto, which Marcia Butler will perform, with George Rothman conducting. Also on the program are Grieg's "Holberg" Suite and Ravel's complete "Mother Goose" ballet score. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Dec. 12 at 3. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 854-7799.)

RICHARD TUCKER MUSIC FOUNDATION GALA—The annual concert blitz for those who love operatic voices. This year's concert includes appearances by Renée Fleming, Jerry Hadley, Thomas Hampson, James Morris, Florence Quivar, Samuel Ramey, Ruth Ann Swenson, and Birgit Nilsson (who will reminisce, but not sing); Daniel Oren conducts the New York Choral Society and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 12 at 7.)

MUSICA ANTIQUA KÖLN—Reinhard Goebel conducts the period-instrument players in works by Telemann, Gluck, and Jean-Féry Rebel. (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 12 at 8.)

ASCENSION MUSIC—Dennis Keene directs the Ascension Music Chorus and Orchestra in polychoral music by Giovanni Gabrieli and Heinrich Schütz, as well as Handel's "Zadok the Priest" and "Dixit Dominus." (Church of the Ascension, Fifth Ave. at 10th St. 254-8553. Dec. 12 at 8.)

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA—Simon Rattle conducts Mahler's Symphony No. 9. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 14 at 8.)

RECITALS

LEON BATES—A powerhouse pianist, one would be tempted to say, since it's hard not to notice that he's a bodybuilder as well as a musician. (He spends two hours a day at the gym, bench-pressing some three hundred pounds.) But though Bates lets loose when he needs to, he has also been known to spin a lyric phrase with great delicacy. His recital will include pieces that require both of these skills—Chopin's "Barcarolle" and Third Ballade, Ravel's "Gaspard de la Nuit," MacDowell's Sonata No. 4 (the "Keltic")—and will end

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CLASSICAL MUSIC–Cont'd

with a jazz-inspired set by Hale Smith. *(Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Dec. 8 at 8.)*

John Browning and Friends—The pianist concludes his three-concert retrospective by collaborating with baritone Thomas Hampson in songs by Barber (including the premières of some unpublished pieces), with pianist Charles Wadsworth in Fauré's "Dolly Suite," and with the Ridge Ensemble in Brahms' G-Minor Piano Quartet. (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 8 at 8.)

Mannes Camerata—Paul Echols and Bradley Brookshire direct music by Monteverdi. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. Dec. 8 at 8. No tickets necessary. . . . ¶ Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. 353-4195. Dec. 10 at 7.)

Beaux Arts Trio—Performing piano trios by Korngold (in D Major), Mendelssohn (in D Minor), and Beethoven (the "Archduke"). (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 8 at 8.) . . . ¶ Piano trios by Beethoven (in E-Flat Major, Op. 1, No. 3), Shostakovich (in E Minor), and Mendelssohn (in D Minor). (Metropolitan Museum. Dec. 10-11 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Presenting Dvořák's F-Major Violin Sonata (Op. 57), Beethoven's C-Minor Piano Trio, and Fauré's G-Minor Piano Quartet. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Dec. 9 at 7:30 and Dec. 12 at 4.)

Guarneri Quartet—Performing string quartets by Mozart (in B-Flat Major, K. 458), Barber, and Ravel. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Dec. 11 at 8. *For information about tickets, call 586-4680.*)

Nina Beilina—The violinist plays Bach's unaccompanied D-Minor Partita; Robert McDonald assists her in Brahms' Sonata No. 3 and Scherzo (from the "FAE Sonata"), Schubert's "Fantaisie," and a concert fantasy on themes from Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess." (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 11 at 8.)

Florence Gould Hall Chamber Players—The French ensemble (with several American colleagues) offers chamber music by Couperin, Fauré, Ibert, Debussy, Ravel, Franck, Varèse, Copland, and Elliott Schwartz. (Florence Gould Hall, 355-6160. Dec. 12 at 3.)

Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music—A Vivaldi concert that includes the "Four Seasons" and Salve Regina (featuring soprano Theresa Hamm-Smith). (Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, 85 S. Oxford St., Brooklyn. Dec. 12 at 3. For information about tickets, call 1-718-855-3053.)

Kathleen Battle—The soprano brings her temperament to bear on works by Handel and Haydn (with pianist Martin Katz), spirituals, and some Ellington and Strayhorn (with saxophonist Grover Washington, Jr., bassist David Williams, and pianist Kenny Barron). (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 13 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Chamber works by Marc-Antonio Consoli, Lee Hyla, Olly Wilson, Deborah Drattell (a première), and Nicholas Maw (his Flute Quartet, with flutist Ransom Wilson and members of the Miami String Quartet). (Walter Reade Theatre, 155 W. 65th St., plaza level. Dec. 13 at 8. *For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)*

Juilliard String Quartet—The ensemble concludes a two-season Haydn sampler by playing four quartets: Op. 50, No. 5 (in F Major); Op. 17, No. 4 (in C Minor); Op. 77, No. 2 (in F Major); and Op. 103 (an unfinished work in D Minor). (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Dec. 14 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—An all-Bach concert for those who like their Baroque music on modern instruments, including the cantata "Non Sa Che Sia Dolore" (with soprano Jayne West) and the A-Minor Concerto for Flute, Violin, and Harpsichord. (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 14 at 8.)

Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio—Performing piano trios by Dvořák (the "Dumky"), Mendelssohn (in D Minor), and Leon Kirchner (a première). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Dec. 14-15 at 8.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Jets—Away until Dec. 18, when they'll face the Dallas Cowboys.

Giants—Vs. the Indianapolis Colts, Dec. 12 at 1.

Knicks—Vs. the Indiana Pacers, Dec. 11. . . . ¶ Vs. the Denver Nuggets, Dec. 14. (Game times, 7:30.)

Nets—Vs. the Chicago Bulls, Dec. 10. . . . ¶ Vs. the Miami Heat, Dec. 13. (Game times, 7:30.)

Rangers—Vs. the Edmonton Oilers, Dec. 8. . . . ¶ Vs. the Buffalo Sabres, Dec. 13. (Game times, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, Dec. 11 at 7:10. . . . ¶ Vs. the Devils, Dec. 14 at 7:40.

Devils—Vs. the Quebec Nordiques, Dec. 9. . . . ¶ Vs. the Edmonton Oilers, Dec. 11. (Game times, 7:35.)

(The Jets and the Giants play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-8111; the Knicks and the Rangers at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Nets and the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

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a signin with
L. Cilluffo

FOR KIDS

(A list of activities for children and their parents or other adults.)

Attention, Laddies and Lassies—"Royal Regiments on Parade" is coming to town. The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (a troupe of bagpipers, drummers, and dancers from Scotland) and the massed bands of the Queen's Division will play Broadway tunes and English and Scottish songs. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6741. Dec. 12 at 1:30 and 5:30.)

"A Child's Christmas in Wales"—A free production of the Dylan Thomas classic, presented by the Circle in the Square Theatre School. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. Dec. 10 at 8; Dec. 11 at 2 and 8; Dec. 12 at 3; and Dec. 14 at 10 A.M. Through Dec. 19. *For reservations,* call 307-2732.)

"Dances of Light"—In a dance piece that incorporates verse and music, Mark DeGarmo and company reënact the story of Hanukkah. Audience participation is encouraged. (Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. 423-3225. Dec. 12 at 11 A.M. and 1.)

"Amahl and the Night Visitors"—Gian Carlo Menotti's Christmas opera. Dino Anagnost conducts the Little Orchestra Society. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Dec. 11 at 1 and 3.)

And Don't Forget—The American Indian Dance Theatre at the Joyce, through Jan. 2 (242-0800). . . . ¶ The Big Apple Circus, at Lincoln Center (268-0055). . . . ¶ "The Nutcracker" at New York State Theatre (870-5570).

ABOVE AND BEYOND

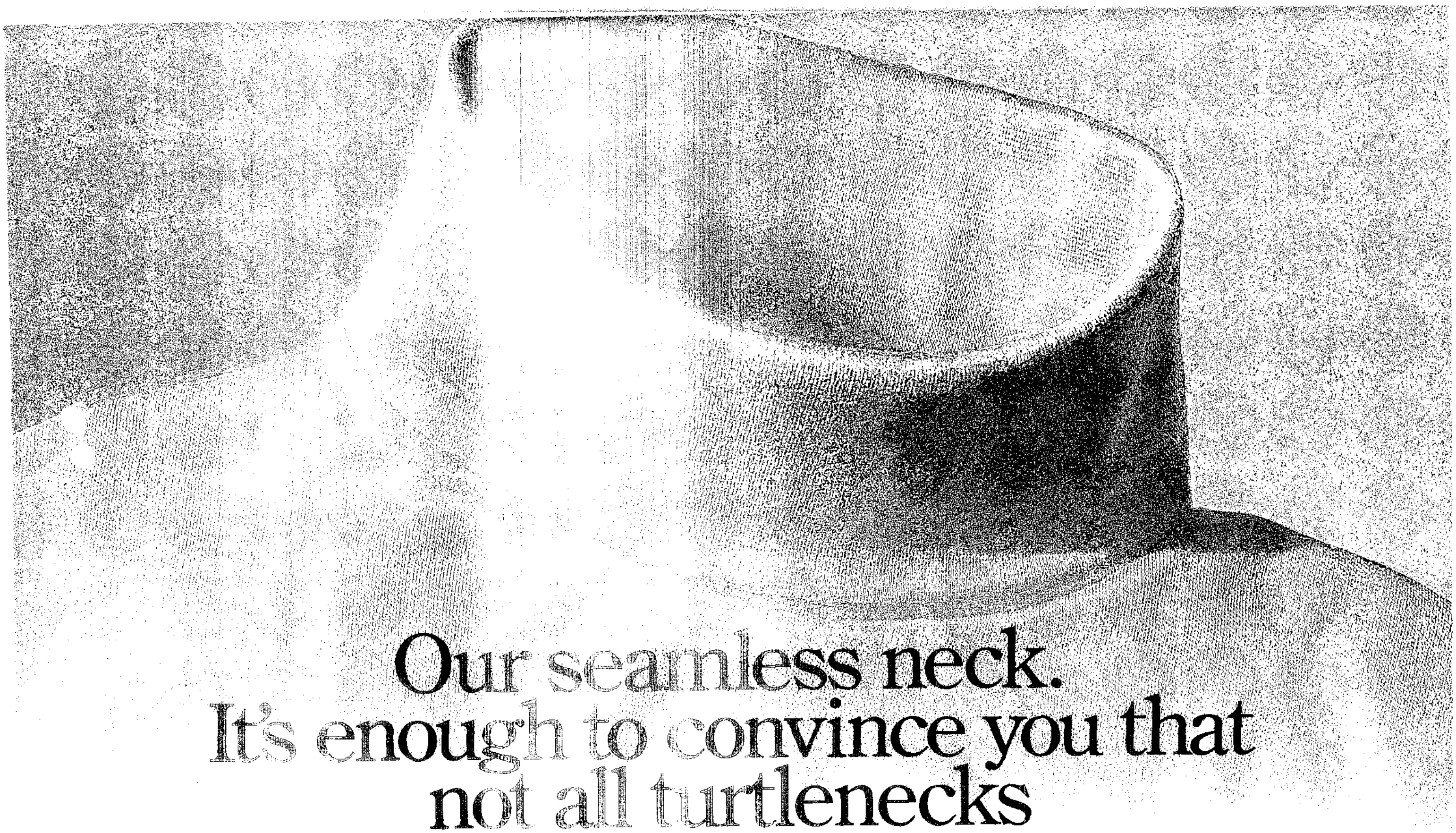
Holiday Fare—A few ideas to get you into the spirit. . . . **revelling in it**—Revellers will dance in the aisles of the Nature Max Theatre at the American Museum of Natural History during the annual Winter Revels, celebrating the winter solstice. Performances include morris and sword dancing and a mummers' play. (Central Park W. at 79th St. 769-5606. Dec. 8-9 at 7:30.) . . . **christmas in lake wobegon**—Garrison Keillor presents "Christmas with Uncle New York," a look at the Big Apple's holiday season from a Lake Wobegon perspective. With the Turtle Island String Quartet. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. For tickets, call 307-7171. Dec. 8-9 at 8. Through Dec. 19.) . . . Keillor continues his live Saturday Town Hall radio broadcast of "A Prairie Home Companion." Special guests will be Bobby McFerrin and Jean Redpath. (Dec. 11 at 5:45. Through Dec. 25.) . . . **readings**—Actor Gregory St. John will present his adaptation of "A Christmas Carol." (Endicott Booksellers, 450 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. Dec. 9 at 8. No tickets necessary. . . . ¶ Abigail Adams Smith Museum, 421 E. 61st St. Dec. 12 at 2. No charge beyond museum admission.) . . . ¶ Dramatic readings of "A Visit from St. Nicholas." (Old Merchant's House Museum, 29 E. 4th St. Dec. 12 at 1:30 and 3. Tickets at the door on the day of the readings.) . . . **crafts fairs**—From the potter's wheel and kiln to you: The Greenwich House Pottery annual holiday sale. (27 Barrow St. *Dec. 10, from 4 to 9; Dec. 11, from 11 to 8; and Dec. 12, from noon to 6. No tickets necessary.)* . . . ¶ WBAI Holiday Crafts Fair. (Ferris Booth Hall, Columbia University, Broadway at 115th St. Dec. 10, from 5 to 9, and Dec. 11-12, from 11 to 6. Tickets at the door on the days of the fair. Weekends through Dec. 19.) . . . ¶ Lincoln Square Holiday Crafts Fair. (Martin Luther King, Jr., High School, 122 Amsterdam Ave., at 65th St. Dec. 11-12, from 11 to 6. Tickets at the door on the days of the fair. Weekends through Dec. 19.) . . . **green christmas**—Hollies and conifers spell winter green at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. On Dec. 12, there will be a tour (at 1) and a sing-along carol concert (at 2:30). (1000 Washington Ave., near Grand Army Plaza. No tickets necessary.)

Readings—Dec. 10 at 7: Stanley Kunitz will read from his own poetry. (New York University, D'Agostino Hall, 108 W. 3rd St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Dec. 13 at 8: Poet James Merrill will read from his most recent book, the memoir "A Different Person." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 7: Richard Kenney and Gjertrud Schnackenberg will read from their own poetry. (French Institute–Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 7: Francine Prose, author of the novel "Household Saints," will read from "The Peaceable Kingdom," her most recent collection of stories. (Limbo, 47 Avenue A, at 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—Dec. 8 at 6: Adam Gopnik, who writes for this magazine, will give a talk titled "The Ghost of the Glass House: Fact and Fantasy in Modern Architecture." (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.) . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 6: *Actor Sam Waterston will* talk about his career. (Rose Building, Kaplan Penthouse, 165 W. 65th St. 875-5440.) . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 8:30: Arthur Danto and Peter Schjeldahl will be among those participating in a panel discussion titled "Abstract Painting: End or Beginning?," in conjunction with the Robert Ryman exhibit. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. 708-9500.)

Walks & Tours—Dec. 7-8, from 6 to 8: Candlelight tours of the Old Merchant's House Museum, a nineteenth-century row house. For more information, call 777-1089. . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 1: All aboard for Governors Island. Big Onion Walking Tours will take in this historic military enclave. For more information, call 439-1090.

LAURENT CILLUFFO



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THE MOVIES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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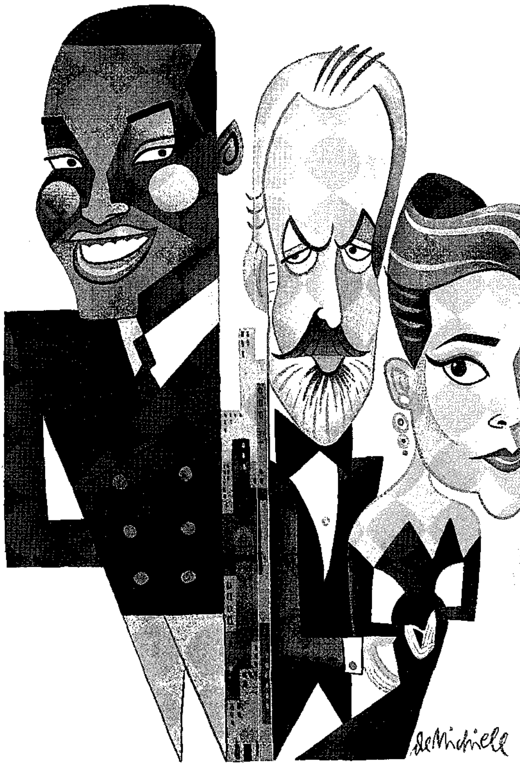
12	13	14				

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 46.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Household Saints" (directed by Nancy Savoca).
Theatre 2: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 3: "Farewell My Concubine" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Snapper" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Wedding Banquet" (Ang Lee).
Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"Aclà" (Aurelio Grimaldi; in Italian).
Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Perfect World" (†).
Theatre 3: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).
Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "The Remains of the Day" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Bronx Tale" (†).
Theatre 3: "Addams Family Values" (†).
Theatre 4: "My Life" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Age of Innocence" (†).
Theatre 6: "Short Cuts" (†).
Theatre 7: "We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story" (†); and "The Remains of the Day" (†).
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Spike and Mike's Festival of Animation '93.
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 9: "Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" (†). From Dec. 10: "Sister Act 2" (Bill Duke).
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 9: "The Joy Luck Club" (Wayne Wang). From Dec. 10: "Geronimo: An American Legend" (Walter Hill).
Theatre 3: "Mazeppa" (Bartabas; in French).
Theatre 4: "George Balanchine's The Nutcracker" (Emile Ardolino); "Josh and S.A.M." (Billy Weber); and "Malice" (Harold Becker).
Theatre 5: "Man's Best Friend" (John Lafia).
Theatre 6: "The Three Musketeers" (†).
Theatre 7: "Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" (†).
19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Perfect World" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Three Musketeers" (†).
Theatre 4: "A Dangerous Woman" (†).
Theatre 5: Through Dec. 9: "The Piano" (†). From Dec. 10: "Wayne's World 2" (Stephen Surjik).
Theatre 6: "George Balanchine's The Nutcracker" (Emile Ardolino); and "A Perfect World" (†).
Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story" (†).
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "The Three Musketeers" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Age of Innocence" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Dec. 9: "Man's Best Friend" (John Lafia). From Dec. 10: "Wayne's World 2" (Stephen Surjik).
Theatre 4: Through Dec. 9: "Josh and S.A.M." (Billy Weber); and "Malice" (Harold Becker). From Dec. 10: "Sister Act 2" (Bill Duke).
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Fearless" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 9: "Addams Family Values" (†). From Dec. 10: "Geronimo: An American Legend" (Walter Hill).
Theatre 3: "Addams Family Values" (†).
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Carlito's Way" (†).
Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Farewell My Concubine" (†).
Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 9: "Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" (†). From Dec. 10: "Sister Act 2" (Bill Duke).
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 9: "Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" (†). From Dec. 10: "Sister Act 2."
Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).
Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Deception" (Graeme Clifford).
Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Man's Best Friend" (John Lafia).
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 9: "Josh and S.A.M." (Billy Weber); and "Malice" (Harold Becker). From Dec. 10: "Wayne's World 2" (Stephen Surjik).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"The Age of Innocence" (†).
Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Six Degrees of Separation" (Fred Schepisi).
Theatre 2: "My Life" (†).



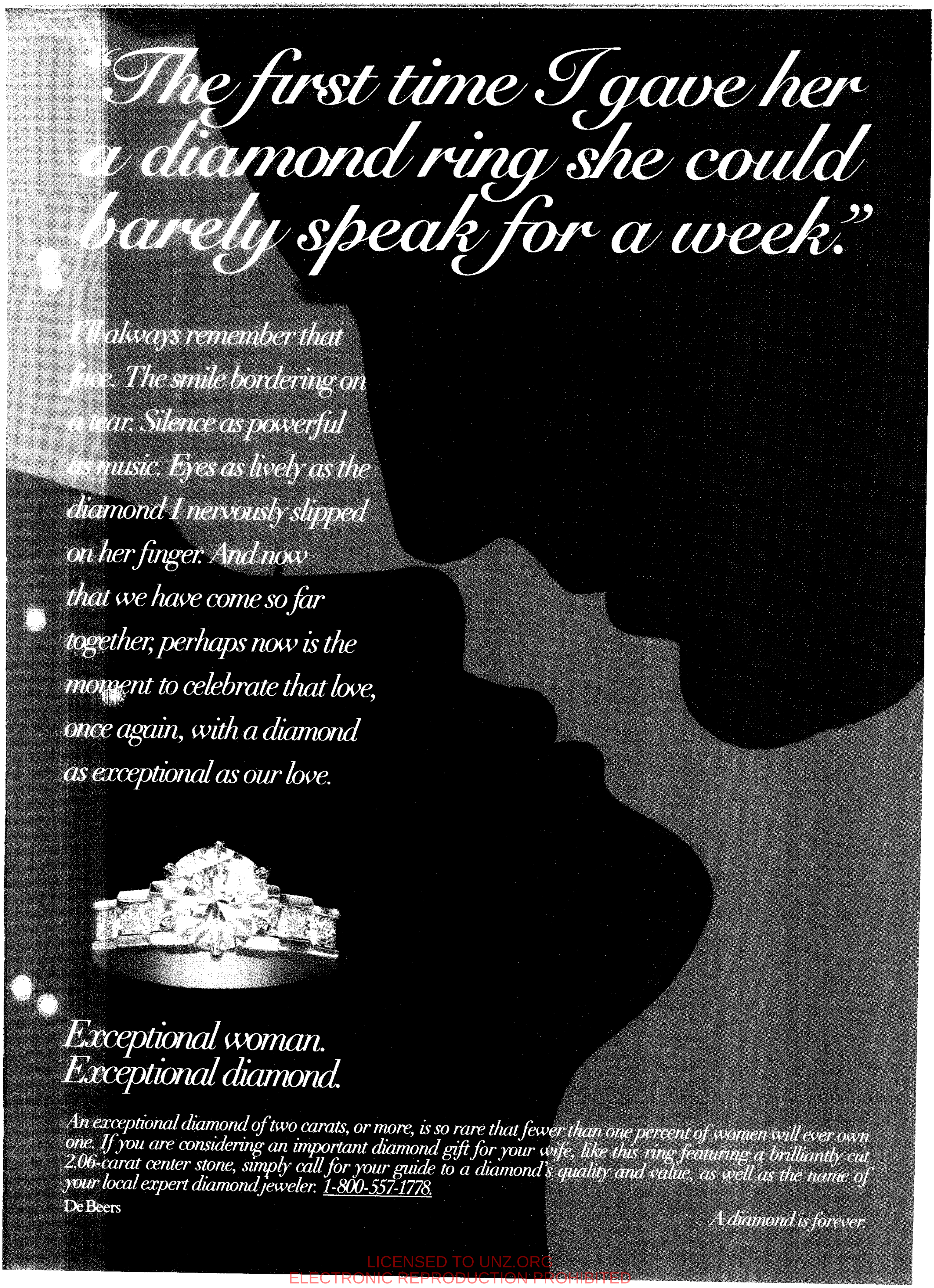
Opening December 8, Will Smith, Donald Sutherland, and Stockard Channing in "Six Degrees of Separation."

ROBERT DEMICHIELL

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "The Three Musketeers" (†).
Theatre 2: "Short Cuts" (†).
Theatre 3: "Short Cuts" (†).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Carlito's Way" (†).
Theatre 2: "Carlito's Way" (†).
Theatre 3: "A Bronx Tale" (†).
Theatre 4: "George Balanchine's The Nutcracker" (Emile Ardolino).
Theatre 5: Through Dec. 9: "Look Who's Talking Now!" (Tom Ropelewski). From Dec. 10: "Geronimo: An American Legend" (Walter Hill).
Theatre 6: "We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story" (†).
Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "A Perfect World" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Perfect World" (†).
Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"The Piano" (†).
New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Addams Family Values" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Saint of Fort Washington" (Tim Hunter), with Matt Dillon and Danny Glover.
68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"The Joy Luck Club" (Wayne Wang).
Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"A Dangerous Woman" (†).
East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story" (†).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Carlito's Way" (†).
Theatre 2: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).
Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 9: "Josh and S.A.M." (Billy Weber); and "Malice" (Harold Becker). From Dec. 10: "Geronimo: An American Legend" (Walter Hill).
Theatre 2: "Addams Family Values" (†).
Theatre 3: "A Bronx Tale" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Three Musketeers" (†).
Theatre 5: Through Dec. 9: "Addams Family Values" (†). From Dec. 10: "Wayne's World 2" (Stephen Surjik).
Theatre 6: "George Balanchine's The Nutcracker" (Emile Ardolino).
Theatre 7: "A Perfect World" (†).
86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 8[illegible] (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Man's Best Friend" (John Lafia).
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 9: "Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" (†). From Dec. 10: "Sister Act 2" (Bill Duke).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "La Dolce Vita" (1959, directed by Federico Fellini; in Italian).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "The War Room" (†).
Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Carlito's Way" (†).
Theatre 2: "Carlito's Way" (†).
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Dazed and Confused" (Richard Linklater).
Theatre 2: "Dangerous Game" (Abel Ferrara).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Baraka" (Mark Magidson and Ron Fricke).
Theatre 2: "Jamón Jamón" (Bigas Luna; in Spanish).
Theatre 3: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alf[illegible] Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).
Theatre 4: "Deception" (Graeme Clifford).
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Carlito's Way" (†).
Theatre 2: "My Life" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Dec. 9: "Carlito's Way" (†). From Dec. 10: "Sister Act 2" (Bill Duke).
Theatre 4: "We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story" (†).
Theatre 5: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).
Theatre 6: "Addams Family Values" (†).
Theatre 7: "The Remains of the Day" (†).
Theatre 8: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).
Theatre 9: Through Dec. 9: "Addams Family Values" (†). From Dec. 10: "Geronimo: An American Legend" (Walter Hill).



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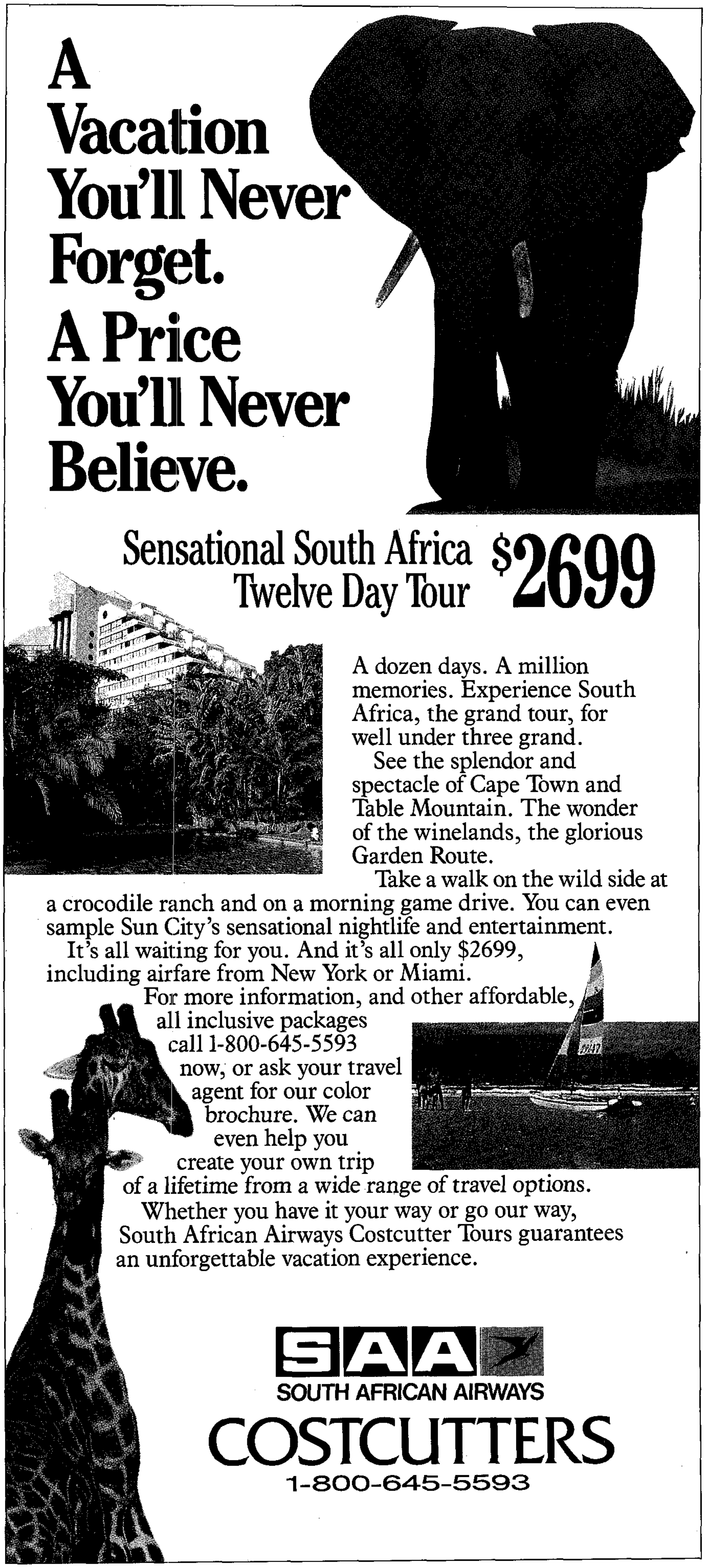

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MOVIE HOUSES-Cont'd

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Josh and S.A.M." (Billy Weber); and "Malice" (Harold Becker).
Theatre 2: "A Bronx Tale" (†).
Theatre 3: "Fearless" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
Through Dec. 9: "The Joy Luck Club" (Wayne Wang).
From Dec. 10: "Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Josh and S.A.M." (Billy Weber); and "Dazed and Confused" (Richard Linklater).
Theatre 2: "Deception" (Graeme Clifford).
Theatre 3: "Fearless" (†).
Theatre 4: "Gettysburg" (Ronald F. Maxwell).
Theatre 5: "The Age of Innocence" (†).
Theatre 6: "Into the West" (Mike Newell).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Carlito's Way" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"A Dangerous Woman" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Much Ado About Nothing" (Kenneth Branagh).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).
Theatre 2: "The War Room" (†).

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
"The Trial" (David Jones), with Kyle MacLachlan.

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"The Remains of the Day" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"The Wedding Banquet" (Ang Lee).

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"George Balanchine's The Nutcracker" (Emile Ardolino).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Farewell My Concubine" (†).
Theatre 2: "Short Cuts" (†).
Theatre 3: "Blue" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Snapper" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Piano" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Carlito's Way" (†).

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 9: "Deception" (Graeme Clifford), with Andie MacDowell and Liam Neeson. From Dec. 10: "Wayne's World 2" (Stephen Surjik).
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 9: "Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" (†). From Dec. 10: "Sister Act 2" (Bill Duke).
Theatre 3: "Addams Family Values" (†).
Theatre 4: "A Perfect World" (†).
Theatre 5: Through Dec. 9: "The Three Musketeers" (†). From Dec. 10: "Geronimo: An American Legend" (Walter Hill).
Theatre 6: "My Life" (†).

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (316-4962)
Through Dec. 9: The Third Annual New Italian Cinema Festival.
From Dec. 10: To be announced.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Age of Innocence" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "A Bronx Tale" (†).
Theatre 2: "Josh and S.A.M." (Billy Weber); and "Malice" (Harold Becker).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Demolition Man" (directed by Marco Brambilla).
Theatre 2: "Man's Best Friend" (John Lafia).
Theatre 3: "A Perfect World" (†).
Theatre 4: "Look Who's Talking Now!" (Tom Ropelewski).
Theatre 5: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis).
Theatre 6: "We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story" (†).
Theatre 7: "A Bronx Tale" (†).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through Dec. 9: "Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" (†).
From Dec. 10: "Sister Act 2" (Bill Duke).

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MOVIE HOUSES-Cont'd

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 9: "The Three Musketeers" (†). From Dec. 10: "Wayne's World 2" (Stephen Surjik).
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 9: "RoboCop 3" (Fred Dekker). From Dec. 10: "Wayne's World 2."
Theatre 3: Through Dec. 9: "Cool Runnings" (Jon Turteltaub). From Dec. 10: "The Three Musketeers" (†).

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Addams Family Values" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 9: "Malice" (Harold Becker). From Dec. 10: "Geronimo: An American Legend" (Walter Hill).
Theatre 2: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

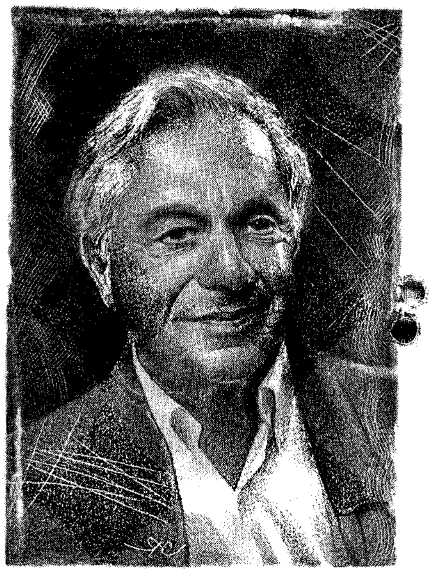
Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through Dec. 9: "Ginger and Fred" (1986, directed by Federico Fellini; in Italian).
Dec. 10-12: "Fellini's Roma" (†).
Dec. 13-14: "City of Women" (1979, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Dec. 8: "Murder Over New York" (1940, Harry Lachman) and "Charlie Chan on Broadway" (1937, Eugene Forde).
Dec. 9: "The Man Who Would Be King" (1975, John Huston) and "The Mackintosh Man" (1973, Huston).
Dec. 10-11: "A Clockwork Orange" (1971, Stanley Kubrick); and "Blue Velvet" (†).
Dec. 12: "The Manchurian Candidate" (1962, John Frankenheimer); and "Seconds" (1966, Frankenheimer).
Dec. 13: "Accattone!" (1961, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian); and "Medea" (1971, Pasolini; in Italian), with Maria Callas.
Dec. 14: "Hush . . . Hush, Sweet Charlotte" (1965, Robert Aldrich) and "What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?" (1962, Aldrich).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Dec. 9 at 2:30: "The Skin" (1981, directed by Liliana Cavani; in Italian). . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 3 and 6: "Imagining Indians" (1993, Victor Masayesva, Jr.), a documentary. . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 6: "The Payoff" (1978, Sergio Corbucci; in Italian). . . . ¶ Dec. 10 at 2:30 and Dec. 12 at 2: "Machine to Kill Bad People" (1952, Roberto Rossellini; in Italian). . . . ¶ Dec. 10 at 6: "Saturday, Sunday, Monday" (1990, Lina Wertmüller; in Italian). . . . ¶ Dec. 10 at 8: "Non ti Pago!" (1942, Carlo Ludovico Bragaglia; in Italian). . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 2: "Il Giudizio Universale" (1961, Vittorio De Sica; in Italian). . . . ¶ Dec. 11-12 at 2:30 and 5: Two different programs of short films shown at the Animated Film Festival, held in Annecy, France. . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 5: "The Gold of Naples" (1957, De Sica; in Italian). . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at noon: "The Miracle" (1948, Rossellini; in Italian). . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 5: "Voyage to Italy" (1954, Rossellini). . . . ¶ Dec. 13 at 2:30: "Street Angel" (1928, Frank Bogzage; a silent film). . . . ¶ Dec. 13 at 6: "Death of a Neapolitan Mathematician" (1992, Mario Martone; in Italian). . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 2:30: "La Sfida" (1957, Francesco Rosi; in Italian). . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 6: "Hands Over the City" (1963, Rosi; in Italian).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Dec. 8 at 2 and 6:30: "A Passing Season" (1992, Gracia Querejeta; in Spanish). . . . ¶ Dec. 8 at 4 and 8:45: "The Bird of Happiness" (1993, Pilar Miró; in Spanish). . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 2 and 6:30 and Dec. 10 at 4 and 8:30: "Hanging Gardens" (1993, Pablo Llorca; in Spanish). . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 4:15 and 8:45 and Dec. 10 at 2 and 6:30: "Intruder" (1993, Vicente Aranda; in Spanish). . . . ¶ Dec. 11-12 at 2: "The Prince and the Pauper" (†). . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 4:30 and 9:15: "Mother Gilda" (1993, Francisco Regueiro; in Spanish). . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 6:45 and Dec. 12 at 4:10: "Marathon" (1993, Carlos Saura; in Spanish). . . . ¶ Dec. 13 at 2: "El Quijote, Part One" (1992, Manuel Gutierrez Aragón; in Spanish). . . . ¶ Dec. 14 at 2: "El Quijote, Part Two" (1992, Gutierrez Aragón; in Spanish).



KEN ADAM, *by general repute the grand old man of movie design, has created a marvellous visual homage to the cartoon universe of his near-namesake Charles Addams in his sets for "Addams Family Values." The details are perfect, down to the master's last watermark, crack, and spiderweb. In his long career, the German-born citizen of England has also put his inspired mark on everything from "Dr. Strangelove" and seven Bond movies to such period films as "Barry Lyndon" (for which he won an Oscar) and "Pennies from Heaven." He's the man with the golden eye.*

RAUL COLON

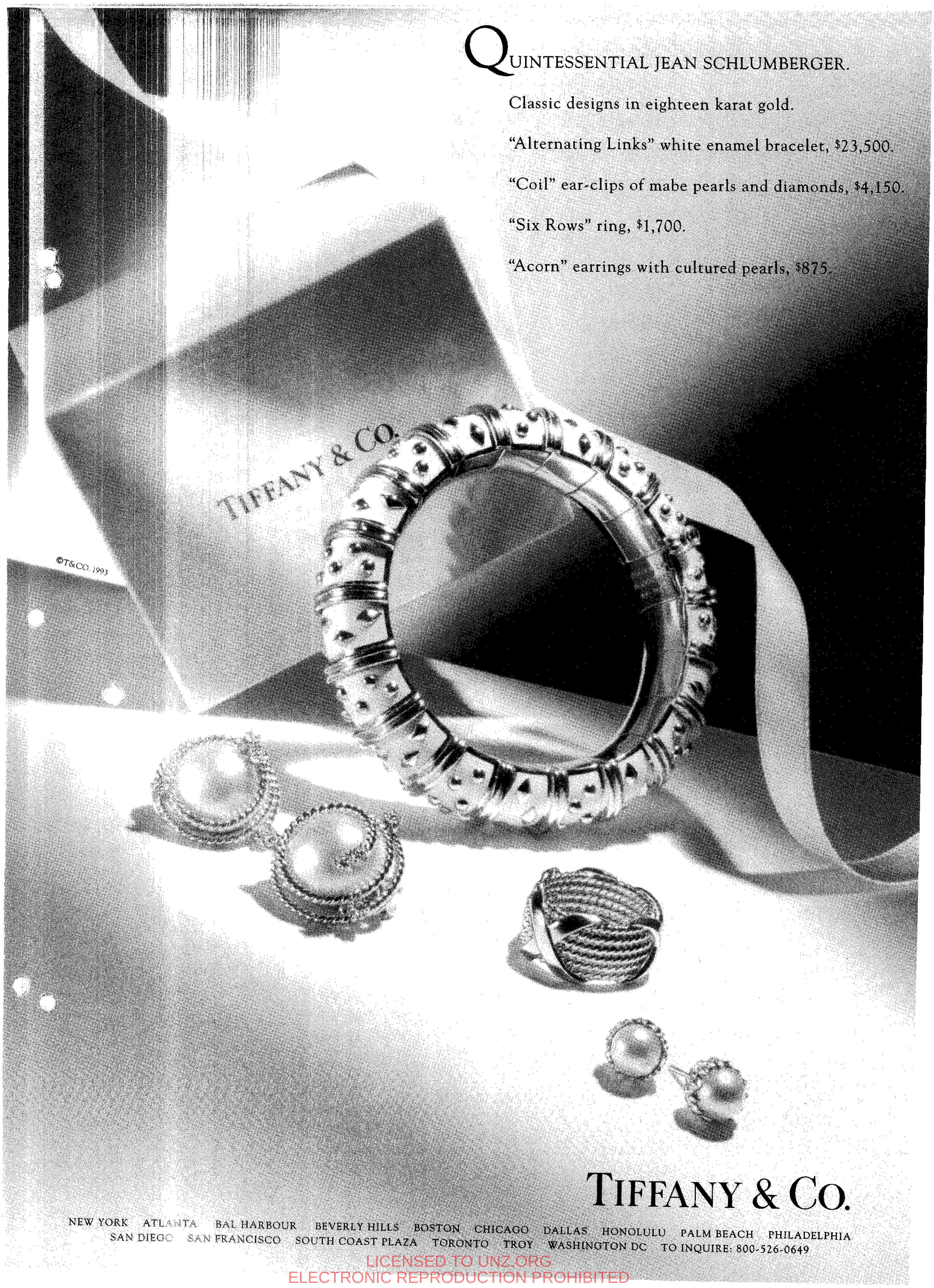
American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—A retrospective program of the museum's first five years. Dec. 12 at 2: "Love Affair" (1939, Leo McCarey). . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 4: "It's the Old Army Game" (1926, Eddie Sutherland).

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—The documentary films of Frederick Wiseman. Dec. 9 at 5:30 and Dec. 11 at 2: "Juvenile Court" (†). . . . ¶ Dec. 10 at 6 and Dec. 12 at 2: "Law and Order" (1969).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Dec. 8 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Leon Marin, Priest" (1961, Jean-Pierre Melville; in French), with Jean-Paul Belmondo, Emmanuèle Riva, and Irène Tunc.

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—A program of fi[illegible]s by or about John Waters: Dec. 9 at 7 and 9: "Divine Waters" (1983, Vito Zagarrio). . . . Dec. 10 at 7: "Mondo Trasho" (1969). . . . Dec. 10 at 9: "Multiple Maniacs" (1970). . . . Dec. 10 at 11: "Pink Flamingos" (1972). . . . Dec. 11 at 7: "Female Trouble" (1974). . . . Dec. 11 at 9: "Desperate Living" (1977). . . . Dec. 11 at 11: "Polyester" (1981). . . . Dec. 12 at 7: "Hairspray" (†). . . . Dec. 12 at 9: "Cry-Baby" (1990).

Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway. (1-718 638-5000)—A program of new Egyptian films. Dec. 11 at 2: "Night of Counting the Years" (1969, Shadi Abdel Salam). . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 2: "Alexandria . . . Why?" (1978, Youssef Chahine).



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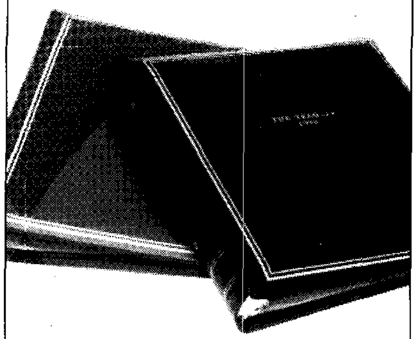

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MOVIES IN BRIEF

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Geronimo: An American Legend—Wes Studi stars as the Apache warrior and leader. With Jason Patric, Robert Duvall, and Gene Hackman. Directed by Walter Hill. Opening December 10.

Sister Act 2—Deloris Van Cartier (Whoopi Goldberg) goes undercover once again, this time to bring the rockin' Word of God to troubled teens. With Kathy Najimy, Mary Wickes, Wendy Makkena, and Maggie Smith. Directed by Bill Duke. Opening December 10.

Six Degrees of Separation—Fred Schepisi's version of John Guare's Broadway play. With Stockard Channing, Will Smith, and Donald Sutherland. Opening December 8.

Wayne's World 2—Mike Myers and Dana Carvey return as Wayne and Garth. The babe quotient is provided by Tia Carrere, Olivia D'Abo, Kim Basinger, and Drew Barrymore. Directed by Stephen Surjik. Opening December 10.

CURRENT FILMS

(The following notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Addams Family Values—You've got to respect a comedy that makes light of arson, torture, and murder in these squeamish times. Some bold anti-wholesome gags pepper the scenes that chronicle the arrival of Baby Pubert (Kaitlyn and Kristin Hooper), the homicidal jealousy of young Wednesday (the uncanny Christina Ricci) and Pugsley (Jimmy Workman), and their subsequent banishment to Camp Chippewa. The marriage of Uncle Fester (Christopher Lloyd) to a clumsy, tacky black-widow murderer (Joan Cusack) doesn't work out as well; there's something off about the way this bad-taste, sick-joke movie condemns the villainess for her nouveau-riche style and affectations. But Anjelica Huston's murmuring understatement as Morticia is *still* amusing; she's delicious when she sniffs at pastels and glumly reads "The Cat in the Hat." Raul Julia returns as the dashing Gomez, and Christopher Hart as the dexterous Thing; this time out, Carol Kane is Granny. Paul Rudnick wrote the gleefully barbed script, and Ken Adam did the aptly Addamsy production design. Barry Sonnenfeld directed, more nimbly than usual.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

The Age of Innocence—Martin Scorsese returns to form with this hectic adaptation of Edith Wharton's novel. Everything looks right, from roast duck to waistcoats, but the movie has no ambitions to be a costume museum; it homes in on the passions that had to be veiled by good manners. As the film begins—a showy, overwhelming scene at the opera—we see Newland Archer (Daniel Day-Lewis) about to announce a perfect match with the young May Welland (Winona Ryder). Such perfection is a prison, *with no hope of escape, and* the vigorous sadness of Day-Lewis tells the whole story; he will never rebel, but in his eyes you see him wishing he could. Less fruitful is the casting of Michelle Pfeiffer as May's older cousin, the mysterious Countess Olenska, with whom Archer falls hopelessly in love.—A.L. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/13/93.) (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, 59th Street East Cinema, Worldwide Cinemas, and Metro Cinema.)

Blue—With Juliette Binoche, directed by Krzysztof Kieślowski. In French. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

A Bronx Tale—Robert De Niro's début as a director. The plot turns on the tussle for a boy's soul: De Niro plays Lorenzo, whose son Calogero is spending too much time with a local hood named Sonny (Chazz Palminteri) and his band of merry men—Tony Toupee, Eddie Mush, and so forth. The tale, set in 1960, was originally written by Palminteri as a five-minute monologue, then grew into a full stage performance before becoming a screenplay; by now it feels tired, and you can't help feeling that the material has already been worked to death onscreen. But Lillo Brancato gives a silky, striking performance as the teen-age Calogero.—A.L. (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 23rd St. West Triplex, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

Carlito's Way—*The story that Brian De Palma* tells in his new gangster movie is the simple and familiar one about a crook who wants [illegible] go straight but can't. The hero, Carlito Brigante (Al Pacino), is a romantic, honorable hoodlum, who seems to have stepped right out of a Warners crime drama from the thirties: he's a man's man in a world of weasels. The picture is fascinating to watch, because the director's technique is far too sophisticated for the schematic, entirely predictable script (by David Koepp, from two novels by Edwin Torres). The great passages here—a tense shoot-out in an East Harlem social club and a long, daring, and beautifully sustained chase sequence at the end—are like dreams of another, better movie. Also with Sean Penn, Penelope Ann Miller, John Leguizamo, and Luis Guzman.—T.R. (11/22/93) (34th St. East, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Regency.)

A Dangerous Woman—With Debra Winger, Barbara Hershey, and Gabriel Byrne, directed by Stephen Gyllenhaal. (Reviewed in this issue.) (19th Street East 6, Tower East, and Festival.)

Farewell My Concubine—Chen Kaige's film is a big, eventful historical soap opera of the "Doctor Zhivago" school. The movie follows a pair of male Beijing Opera performers, Cheng Dieyi (Leslie Cheung) and Duan Xiaolou (Zhang Fengyi), from their school days, in the nineteen-twenties and early thirties, to their farewell performance together, in 1977. Chen keeps the action charging forward breathlessly, for more than two and a half hours, and at a certain point you begin to realize that the obvious theatre-versus-life ironies are only a small part of what the movie is about. [illegible] real subject is whether it's possible, in times that demand perpetual revolutions in values, to remain true to anyone or anything: an art, an ideal, a friend, a wife, oneself. In Mandarin.—T.R. (10/11/93) (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Fearless—The central event in Peter Weir's movie is the crash of a commercial airliner. Weir knows a metaphor for the fragility of modern man's existence when he sees one, and he seizes on this calamity as if it were something that he had been searching for all his life: an ideal vehicle for the sort of apocalyptic imagery and metaphysical speculation that dominated his early films, like "Picnic at Hanging Rock" (1975) and "The Last Wave" (1977). In terms of imagery and rhythm, this is a stunning piece of filmmaking; it's also a shamelessly florid exercise in therapeutic uplift. Essentially, Weir hijacks a fairly straightforward story about a couple of crash survivors (played by Jeff Bridges and Rosie Perez) and takes it to the Twilight Zone. Also with Isabella Rossellini, John Turturro, and Tom Hulce. Screenplay by Rafael Yglesias, based on his novel.—T.R. (10/25/93) (34th Street Showplace, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

Mrs. Doubtfire—Robin Williams impersonates a stocky, middle-aged female housekeeper, and he's *too inventive an actor not to* get a few gigantic laughs out of the stunt. (His makeup and wardrobe may remind alert viewers of Burt Lancaster's drag cameo in "The List of Adrian Messenger.") But the picture as a whole isn't in the class of "Tootsie" and "Some Like It Hot," mostly because its premise is sentimental, not cynical: Williams's character, a divorced man, becomes Mrs. Doubtfire in order to get around a court-ordered custody arrangement and

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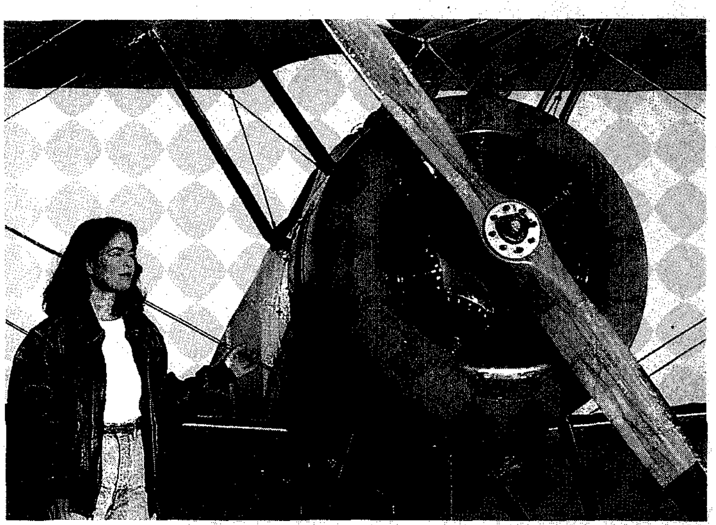

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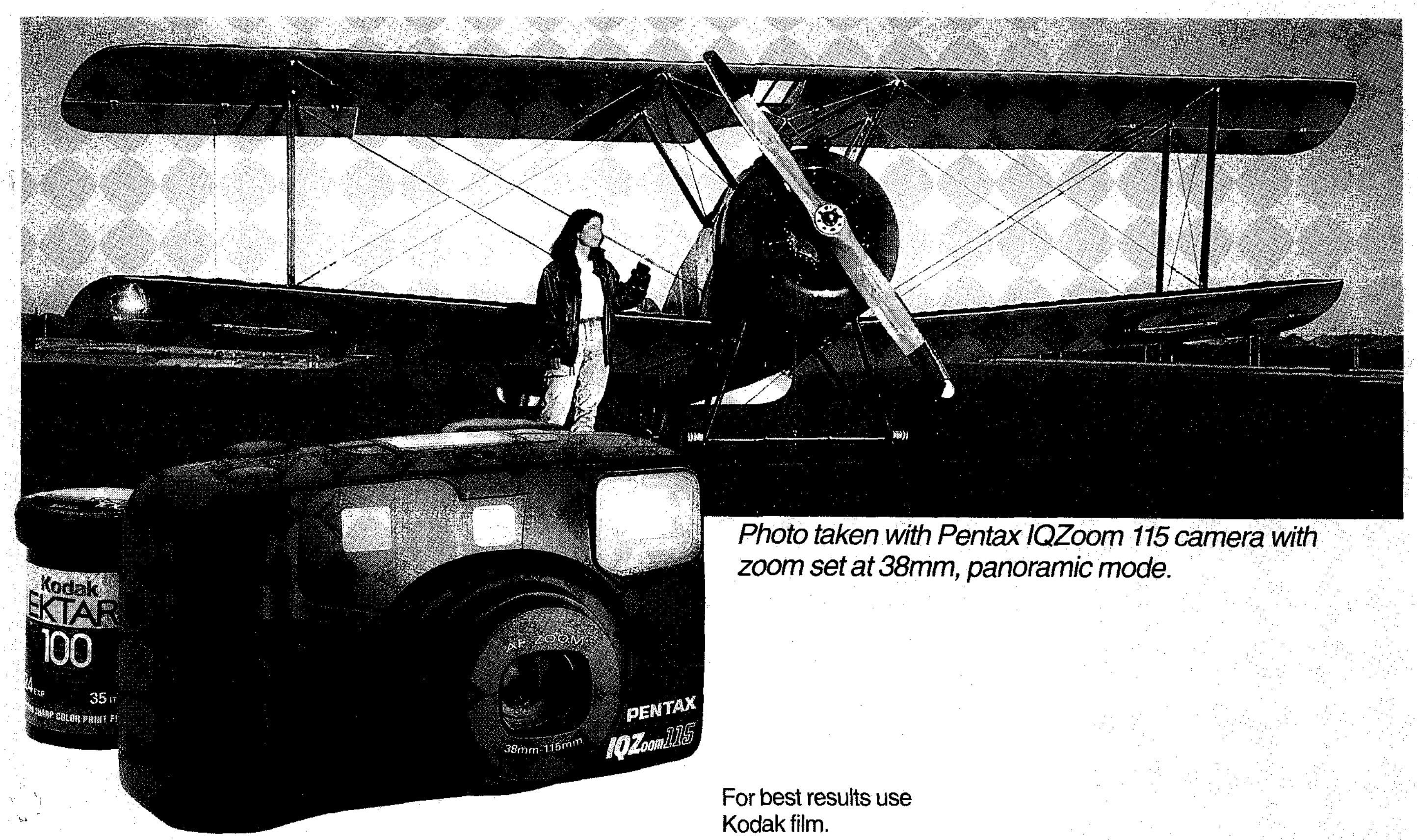

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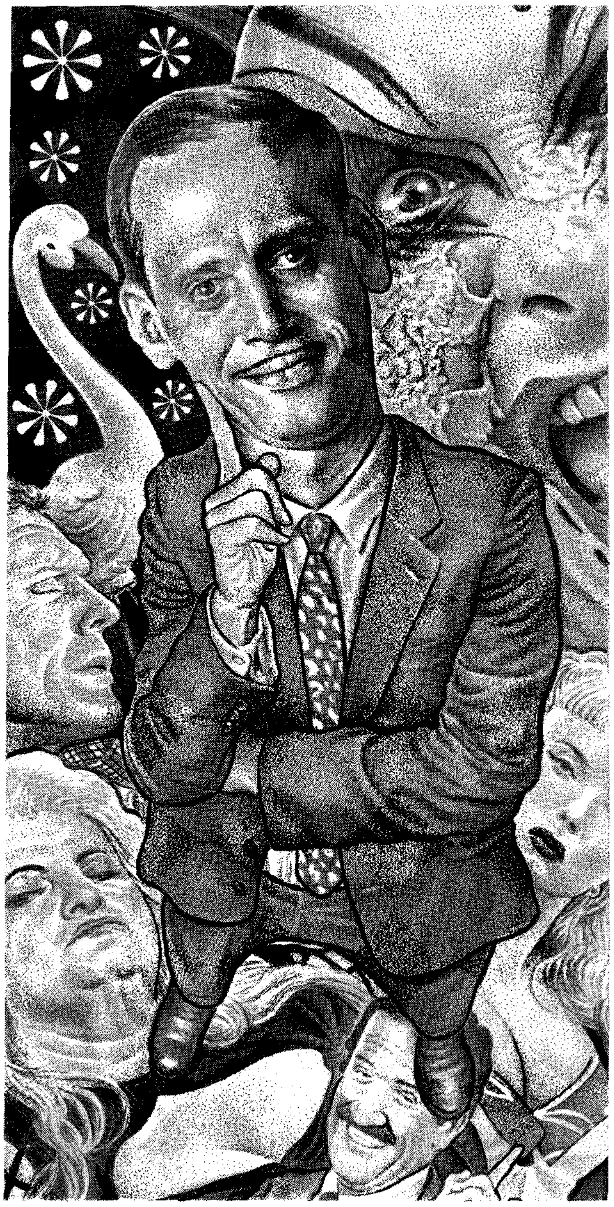
spend more time with his adorable children. Lessons are learned, loved ones are hugged, and personal growth is achieved—as usual, at the expense of comedy. Some, apparently including Williams, like it warm and cuddly, too. Nobody's perfect. Also with Sally Field, Pierce Brosnan, Robert Prosky, and Harvey Fierstein. Directed—with a very heavy hand—by Chris Columbus, from a script by Randi Mayem Singer and Leslie Dixon.—T.R. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Gotham Cinema, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and National Twin.)

MY LIFE—Bruce Joel Rubin's first film as a director is the story of a fortyish man named Bob Jones (Michael Keaton) who, upon learning that he has inoperable cancer, videotapes a kind of autobiography to immortalize himself for his unborn child. For Rubin, the screenwriter of "Ghost" and "Jacob's Ladder," mortality has turned out to be great shtick. He has identified a new, gigantic, and readily exploitable movie market: people who know that they're going to die (sooner or later) and feel pretty lousy about it. This picture—released by Columbia, which is owned by Sony—ultimately plays like a long, cruel infomercial for camcorders. Its stated moral is, in the hero's words: "Dying is a really hard way to learn about living." Receiving spiritual education from big-budget studio movies is no day at the beach, either. Also with Nicole Kidman, Haing S. Ngor, and Michael Constantine.—T.R. (11/22/93) (Village Theatre VII, Coronet, Chelsea Cinemas, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

A PERFECT WORLD—Clint Eastwood's oddly absorbing new movie tracks the wayward progress of an escaping convict (played by Kevin Costner) and his eight-year-old hostage (T. J. Lowther); Eastwood plays the Texas Ranger who leads the pursuit. It's Costner's picture all the way: the movie, like his character, seems to be making itself up as it goes along, and Eastwood, who's nominally in charge, just follows blindly and doggedly, a director eating the dust of a runaway story. The script, by John Lee Hancock, has a manic, self-destructive quality. By the end, the picture has recalled so many other films that it achieves an almost surreal incoherence; it feels as if it had been written by a movie buff on Sodium Pentothal. But as jarring and fundamentally goofy as the movie is, it never feels like an ordinary, generic Hollywood product: at every moment, there's something to gape at—sometimes in admiration, often in disbelief. Also with Laura Dern.—T.R. (12/6/93) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

THE PIANO—Sometime in the last century, a Scottish mute called Ada (Holly Hunter) travels to New Zealand with her beloved piano and her daughter Flora (Anna Paquin). She is engaged to Stewart (Sam Neill), but it is his right-hand man, Baines (Harvey Keitel), who becomes the focus of her interest. He buys the piano, and gives her a chance to win it back: an erotic agreement that gathers intensity and drives the film onward to its gasping conclusion. The writer and director, Jane Campion, has turned her native New Zealand, with its desolate beach and writhing forests, into a potent backdrop; the rain and mud make the love story look like trench warfare—you come away from the movie battered and amazed. It's almost too wrought and compressed for its own good, but the performances breathe it full of life. Hunter, especially, gives a fiery portrait of a rebellious Victorian spirit. The only real anachronism is Michael Nyman's music; it's a relief when Ada suddenly bursts into Chopin.—A.L. (11/29/93) (Angelika Film Center, 19th Street East 6, Beekman, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

THE REMAINS OF THE DAY—Anthony Hopkins plays Stevens, a butler who has given long and faithful service at Darlington Hall and maintained his emotional temperature at absolute zero. This has cost him dearly: first, he failed to see that his master (James Fox) was dangerously bent on appeasement with the Germans in the nineteen-thirties; and, second, he refused to accept, or even acknowledge, the love offered to him by the housekeeper (Emma Thompson). Adapted by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala from the novel by Kazuo Ishiguro, this Merchant-Ivory production strains so hard to portray dignified restraint that it almost seizes up with good manners. This is especially unfair to Thompson, who is forced to smother her naturally high spirits; as for Hopkins, you can't help waiting for a touch of Hannibal Lecter behind the façade. Why serve a bunch of snobs with professional aplomb when you could serve them spit-roasted with watercress?—A.L. (11/15/93) (Village Theatre VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Paris.)



At Anthology Film Archives, films by John Waters.

DREW FRIEDMAN

SHORT CUTS—Robert Altman uses nine short stories by Raymond Carver as the raw material for a latter-day "Nashville," set in Southern California. (One story line—by far the weakest—is the invention of Altman and his co-screenwriter, Frank Barhydt.) Most of the stories in the three-hour-and-seven-minute movie are about misunderstandings—often outright hostilities—between men and women, and the juxtaposition of all these poisonous domestic relationships has the effect of turning Carver's closely observed, scrupulously specific small dramas into a big, obvious generalization about men's brutality and women's capacity for endurance. Despite Altman's exquisite control of pace, the movie seems thin and insubstantial, and every moment feels pretty much like every other. Of the twenty-two principal actors, a handful do terrific work here: Jack Lemmon, Bruce Davison, Julianne Moore, Lily Tomlin, Jennifer Jason Leigh, and Madeleine Stowe.—T.R. (9/27/93) (Village Theatre VII, Cinema II, Cinema 3rd Avenue, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

THE SNAPPER—A return trip to the Dublin of "The Commitments," and every bit as welcome as the earlier film. The Curley family is in trouble: young Sharon (Tina Kellegher) is going to have a snapper—a baby, that is, conceived after a drunken fumble on a car hood. Sharon knows who the father is, but she won't let on to her friends, let alone to her father (Colm Meaney). It sounds like a drab little tale, but in the hands of director Stephen Frears it becomes a headlong tumble into good humor; he seems as fascinated by his characters as the family is by the new arrival, and the camera scuttles around, tolerantly picking up details. The script is adapted by Roddy Doyle from his own novel, which guarantees a string of firecracker jokes, caustic but never cruel; look out for the bemused parents discovering the joy of sex.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

THE THREE MUSKETEERS—The "Boys in Doublets" edition, with Chris O'Donnell as the Gascon upstart D'Artagnan, and Kiefer Sutherland, Oliver Platt, and Charlie Sheen as Athos, Porthos, and Aramis. They lack the ardor and physical authority to make derring-do stir emotions; Platt gets by on comic attitude alone. The look is opulent, the swordplay extravagant, and Alexandre Dumas's warhorse plot still hooks an audience. But David Loughery's adaptation, with cheesy anachronistic dialogue and bits from previous Musketeer movies and costume pictures, seems intended to do nothing more than give youngsters their first taste of swashbuckling. Loughery and the director, Stephen Herek, provide an insidious form of ageism. King Louis XIII (Hugh O'Conor) is a boy, his queen a pure child-wife (Gabrielle Anwar); when they join D'Artagnan and the Musketeers in revolt against Tim Curry's tiresomely slimy Cardinal Richelieu, it's youth and beauty against age and corruption.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, Orpheum VII, and Embassy. . . . ¶ 84th Street Sixplex; through Dec. 9.)

TIM BURTON'S THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS—This full-length animated movie was shot in stop motion, with all the febrile, twittery fascination that the medium exerts; it has a magic-toyshop feeling, with unexpected objects stuttering into life. Directed by Henry Selick, it was devised and co-produced by Tim Burton, who leaves a trail of his familiar obsessions: graveyard humor, whirling snow, a velvety darkness. But the atmosphere is too rich for the pallid plot: Jack Skellington, the bony master of ceremonies in Halloweentown, discovers the spirit of Christmas and tries to import it into his ghoulish world. The clash of styles—demonic vs. cute—pays off only toward the end; for all the witty, festering details, the film is strangely static. The score is by Danny Elfman.—A.L. (Village East Cinemas. . . . ¶ Sutton, 86th Street East Twin,

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84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1; through Dec. 9. . . . ¶ Guild; starting Dec. 10.)

The War Room—The somewhat deranged charm of James Carville, the chief strategist of Bill Clinton's Presidential campaign, dominates D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus's exhilarating documentary. The film does justice to the sheer reckless pleasure of electoral gamesmanship. And Carville is the largest, most resonant character in recent American movies, someone whose work is such a complete expression of his personality that you can't help laughing: the unity of this life and this art seems too good to be true.—T.R. (11/8/9[illegible] (Film Forum, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story—It's und[illegible]standable that Steven Spielberg would want to sponsor a dinosaur cartoon for kids too young to see "Jurassic Park," but it's doubtful that this moralistic sketch pad will satisfy the tykes. In Hudson Talbott's original picture book, a little green alien with an I.Q.-enhancing formula educates and civilizes a group of dinosaurs, then drops them into twentieth-century New York City. The screenwriter, John Patrick Shanley, ruins the concept's antic, wispy charm by adding banal juvenile leads as well as a preachy rivalry between kindly Captain NewEyes, who promotes interspecies understanding, and cruel Professor ScrewEyes, who exploits fear and paranoia by turning the dinosaurs back into wild animals. Professor ScrewEyes presents the beasts as monsters in a circus—sort of the way Spielberg did in the PG-13 "Jurassic." The not-so-hidden message is that wholesome cartoons are better for children than creature features. No one over age six will buy it. The voice actors include John Goodman, Martin Short, Walter Cronkite, Kenneth Mars, and Julia Child; Dick Zondag, Ralph Zondag, Phil Nibbelink, and Simon Wells directed.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, Bay Cinema, First & 62nd Cinemas, East 85th Street, Chelsea Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pa[illegible]e Kael and Michael Sragow.)

Blue Velvet (1986)—Written and directed by David Lynch, this is possibly the only coming-of-age movie in which sex has the danger and the heightened excitement of a horror picture. The charged erotic atmosphere makes the film something of a trance-out, but Lynch's humor keeps breaking through, too. His fantasies may come from his unconscious, but he recognizes them for what they are, and he's tickled by them. The film is consciously purplish and consciously funny, and the two work together in an original, down-home way. The setting is an archetypal small, sleepy city in an indefinite mythic present that feels like the past, and Kyle MacLachlan is Jeffrey, the clean-cut young man who's scared of his dirty thoughts (but wants to have them anyway). He commutes between the blue lady of the night (Isabella Rossellini, who's a dream of a freak) and the sunshine girl he loves (Laura Dern). The movie has so much aural-visual humor and poetry that it's sustained despite the wobbly plot and other weaknesses. Lynch skimps [illegible]n commercial-movie basics and fouls up on them, too. But his use of irrational material works the way it's supposed to: at some not fully conscious level we read his images. With Dennis Hopper, who gives the movie a jolt of horrific energy, and Dean Stockwell, who is a smiling wonder as Ben the sandman.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Dec. 10-11.)

Fellini's Roma (1972)—It's an imperial gesture at documentary: a sketchbook about the city of Fellini's imagination, that love-hate dream-nightmare city which is more familiar to us by now than Rome itself. This autobiographical fantasy includes extras painted up as voracious citizens, a high-camp ecclesiastical fashion show, and a mock excavation in a subway which uncovers a Roman villa. Designed by Danilo Donati, who is a magician, and shot by the great Giuseppe Rotunno, the film is like a funeral ode to an imaginary city under purplish, poisoned skies. Some of the images are magisterial and marvellous, like a series of stormy Turners, but whenever there's dialogue or thought, the movie is fatuous. Fellini is at the center of the film, played as a young man fresh from the provinces by a toothsome, lusciously handsome actor (dimply Peter Gonzales, from Texas), and then by himself, speaking in English—most of it dubbed—in this version. The picture reaches its nadir when he goes celebrity-chasing and interviews Gore Vidal, who informs us that Rome is as good a place as any to wait for the end of the world. Fellini appears to see himself as official greeter for the apocalypse. In English and Italian.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Dec. 10-12.)

Hairspray (1988)—The writer-director John Waters treats the message movie as a genre to be parodied, just like the teenpic. Combining the two, he comes up with a pop dadaist musical comedy, set in Baltimore in 1962. Waters loves narrative, and he has half a dozen plots crisscrossing each other. In the middle are the spherical Mrs. Edna Turnblad (played by the male actor Divine) and her baby-blimp daughter, Tracy (Ricki Lake); they wear matching mother-and-daughter outfits. Tracy, who's the newest teen-age dancer on "The Corny Collins Show," discovers that black kids aren't allowed to take part and she becomes a leader in the fight for integration. Meanwhile, Divine watches over Tracy and preens like a mother hen. There's a what-the-hell quality to Divine's acting which the film needs; it would be too close to a real teenpic without it. With Colleen Fitzpatrick, Leslie Ann Powers, Michael St. Gerard, Ruth Brown, Debbie Harry, Sonny Bono, Jerry Stiller, Ric Ocasek, Pia Zadora, and Waters himself as a sicko psychiatrist.—P.K. (Anthology Film Archives; Dec. 12.)

Juvenile Court (1973)—In his early documentaries, each time Fred Wiseman examines an institution, he seems to uncover a whole new world, and in each of these worlds he finds people—those in authority and those caught in the wheels of authority—struggling with perversely funny, insurmountable, tragic everyday problems. This two-and-a-half-hour film was made in the Memphis Juvenile Court. The characters include an eleven-year-old prostitute; a boy babysitter charged with assaulting the child in his care; the child's mother, who is obsessed with what seems to have been a minor feeling-up incident; a teen-age girl who slashes her wrist and says her stepfather made advances to her; and an intelligent judge trying to serve justice in impossible situations. When the children plead for themselves, their voices have a familiar terror. They're trapped by everything. Wiseman's open-eyed approach to the stories of their lives is perhaps motivated less by reforming zeal than by his own sense of the mystery of those lives.—P.K. (Museum of Television and Radio; Dec. 9 and 11.)

The Prince and the Pauper (1937)—As the swashbuckling soldier of fortune Miles Hendon, Errol Flynn brings welcome jauntiness to this smart, handsome adaptation of Mark Twain's novel about the abused guttersnipe, Tom Canty, and the pampered prince, Edward Tudor, who playfully—and perilously—swap identities before Edward ascends to the throne of his father, King Henry VIII. The director, William Keighley, handles the court intrigues, slum scenes, and sword fights with dispatch, but slows down in a lengthy coronation sequence (perhaps deliberately—George VI was crowned a week after the movie opened). Still, most of the way through, Laird Doyle's script retains Twain's debunking spirit, exposing aristocratic arrogance and sixteenth-century Realpolitik. Montagu Love is potent as a cynical, self-aware King Henry, and Claude Rains exudes villainous urbanity as Lord Hertford.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; Dec. 11-12.)

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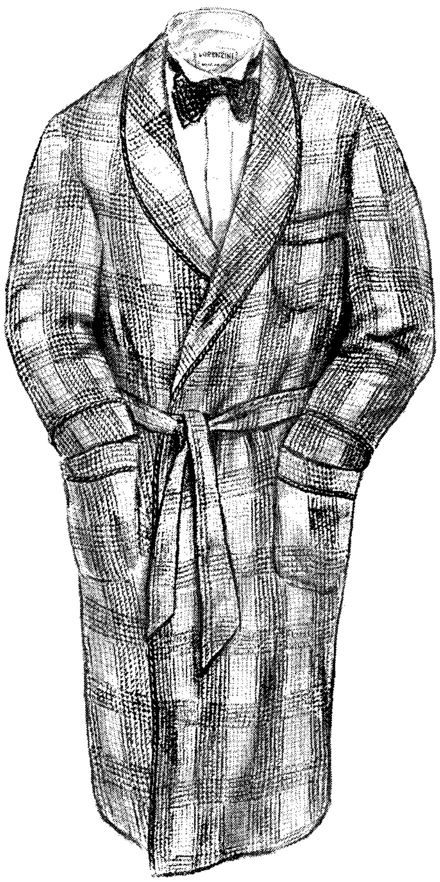

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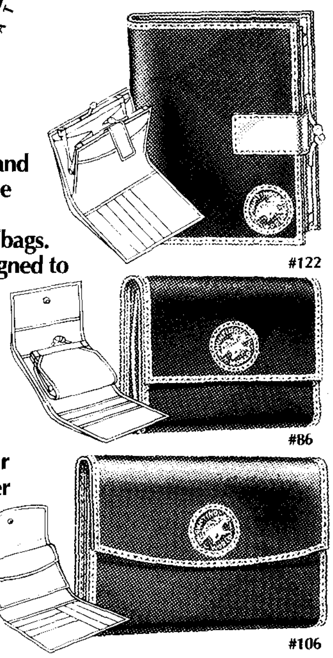

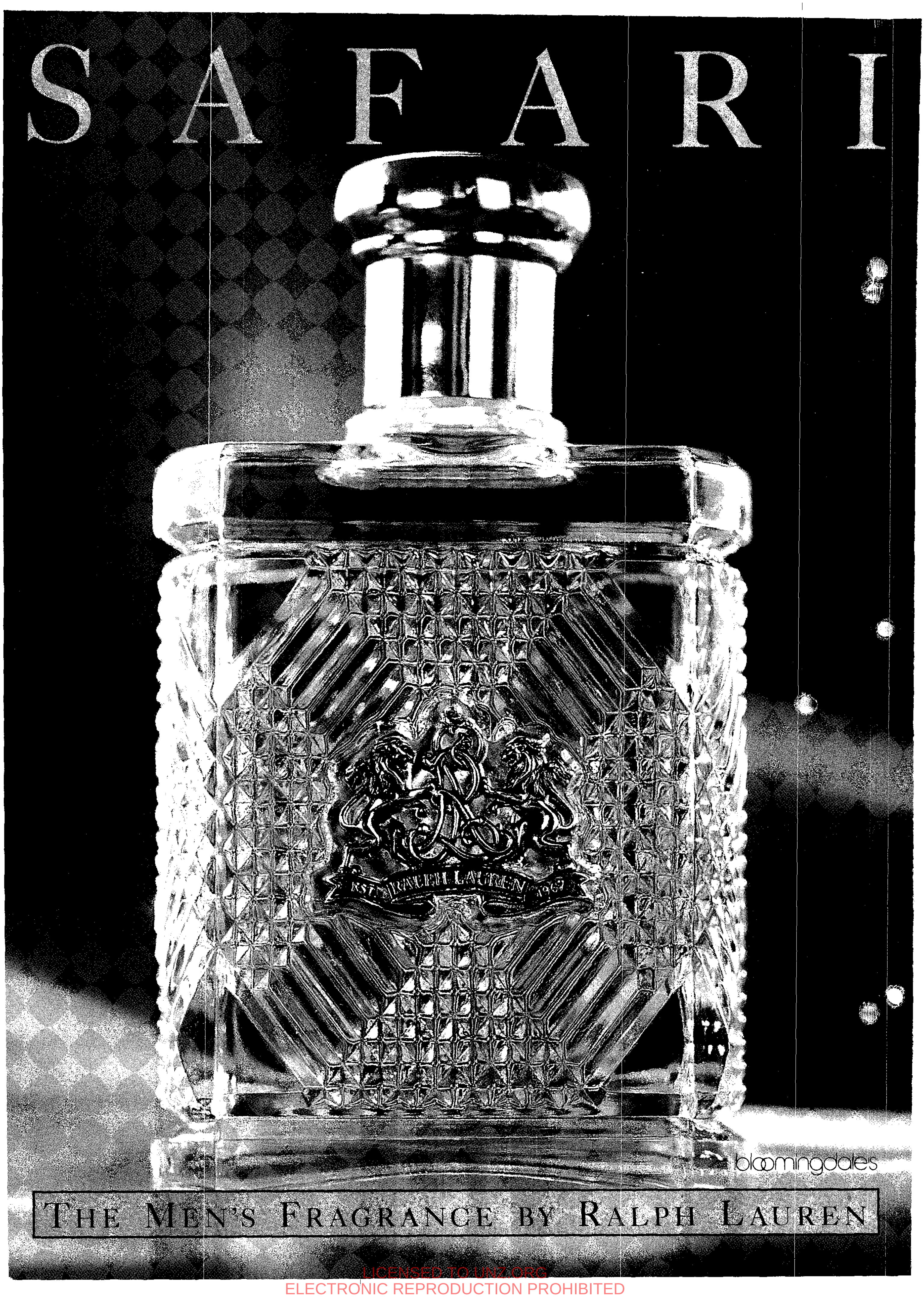
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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

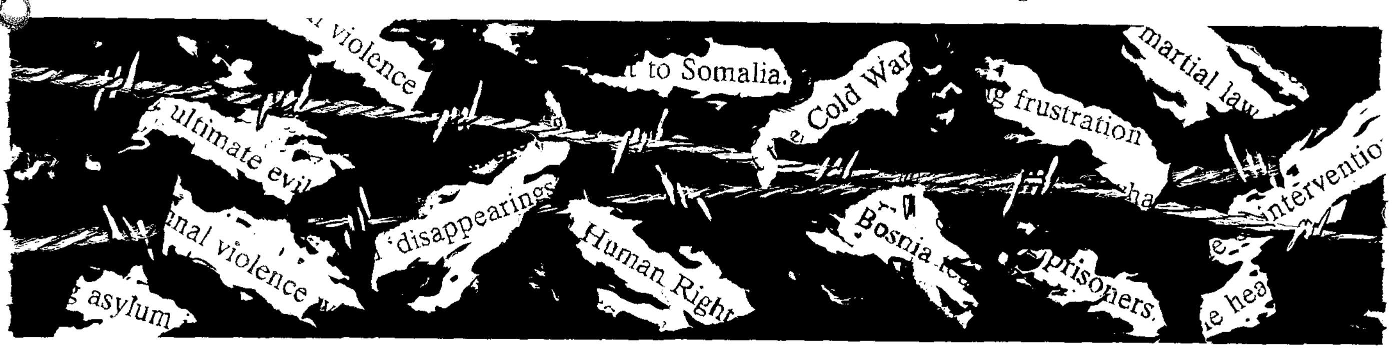
HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH LOOKS WITHIN

THE human-rights movement is in something of a quandary, theoretically and on the ground, and no one is more acutely aware of this than Kenneth Roth, who in October was appointed executive director of Human Rights Watch, the international monitoring-and-advocacy group perhaps better known here (and to victims and victimizers alike worldwide) through the scrupulous work of one or another of its regional divisions: Americas Watch, Africa Watch, Asia Watch, Middle East Watch, and Helsinki Watch (which is responsible for Europe and the former Soviet Union). Meeting with us in his modest office at the organization's headquarters, which is on Fifth Avenue, across from the Public Library, Mr. Roth, who is thirty-eight years old and as unassuming as his workplace, seemed all too mindful of the challenges to the very notion of human rights, as such, which have been put forth of late: the charge made by several Asian delegates to last summer's big human-rights conference in Vienna that the movement was imposing Western cultural norms on their societies; the charge made by Catharine MacKinnon, at this year's Amnesty International lecture series at Oxford, that human rights, as generally understood, offer little protection to women; the charge, inspired by certain strains of post-structuralist thinking, that human rights are essentially a fiction, schemed up to keep the poor or the colonized or the otherwise marginal in their miserable place. Mr. Roth, having served for the past six years as the deputy director of Human Rights Watch, is also well versed in—and more eager to discuss—the less philosophical, more immediate (because human lives hang in the balance) questions facing his organization as the movement, with the withering away of the Cold War, undergoes, as he put it, "a paradigm shift": questions about how best to identify abuses, and where to apply pressure quickly to get them stopped.

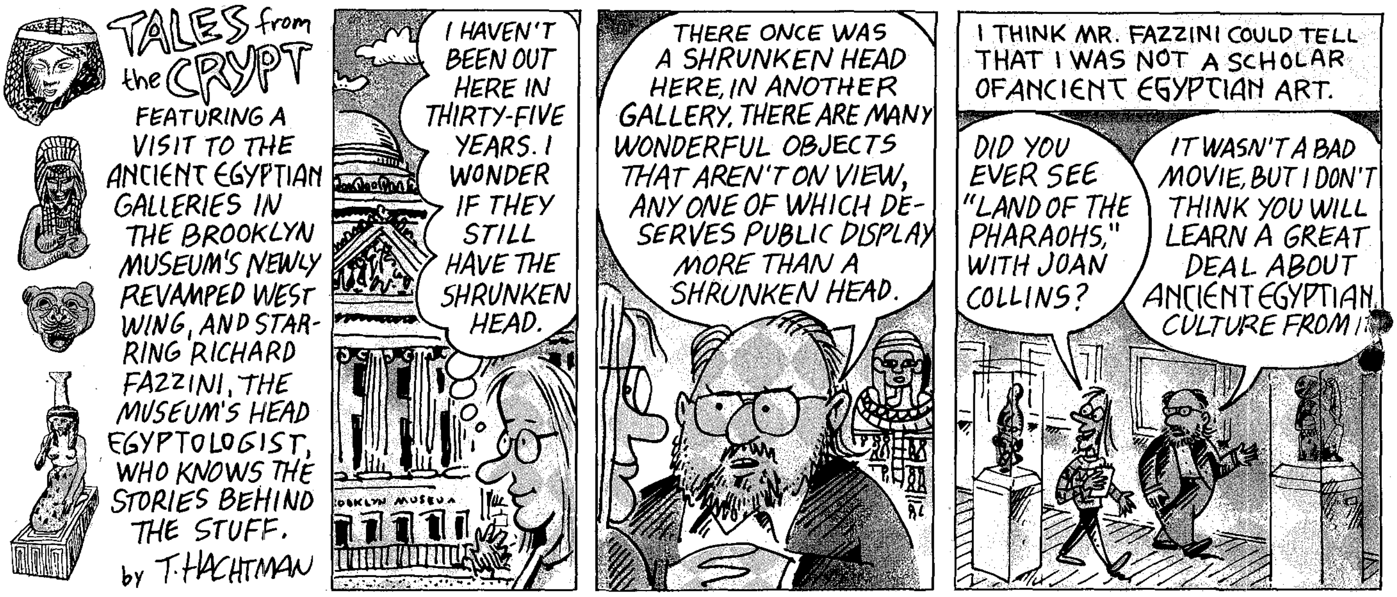
"Now that the Cold War is over, our challenge is to develop new tools, new weapons," Mr. Roth told us. "In the seventies, the paradigm was the political prisoner. Human-rights activists took an individual, case-oriented approach—one that often focussed on the educated dissident. And we were remarkably successful—so much so that today in Latin America and the Caribbean, for example, where we did much of this work, there are remarkably few political prisoners outside Peru, Cuba, and Haiti. In the eighties, the paradigm shifted to what might be called deniable abuses—for instance, the killings and 'disappearings' carried out by the Salvadoran death squads, whose membership was secret, and whose connection to the government was blurred. Also in the eighties we saw a great deal of indiscriminate shelling and bombing of civilians, and in an effort to halt this we expanded our activities to include war monitoring."

And what about the nineties, we asked.

"I have no doubt that communal violence will be the greatest problem for us," Mr. Roth replied. "The question is what our response will be. If Bosnia teaches us anything, it is that monitoring abuses and then stigmatizing the responsible regimes—and these have been our tools for years—is not enough. After all, the atrocities in Sarajevo have occurred onscreen, courtesy of CNN. And the Serbian leaders are as stigmatized as you're going to get. But the Serbian leaders are not linked—as, say, the leaders in El Salvador were or those in East Germany were—to one of the superpowers. Throughout the Cold War, abuses were



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELLIOTT BANFIELD


TALES from the CRYPT
FEATURING A VISIT TO THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN GALLERIES IN THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM'S NEWLY REVAMPED WEST WING, AND STARRING RICHARD FAZZINI, THE MUSEUM'S HEAD EGYPTOLOGIST, WHO KNOWS THE STORIES BEHIND THE STUFF.
by T. HACHTMAN
I HAVEN'T BEEN OUT HERE IN THIRTY-FIVE YEARS. I WONDER IF THEY STILL HAVE THE SHRUNKEN HEAD.
BROOKLYN MUSEUM
THERE ONCE WAS A SHRUNKEN HEAD HERE, IN ANOTHER GALLERY. THERE ARE MANY WONDERFUL OBJECTS THAT AREN'T ON VIEW, ANY ONE OF WHICH DESERVES PUBLIC DISPLAY MORE THAN A SHRUNKEN HEAD.
I THINK MR. FAZZINI COULD TELL THAT I WAS NOT A SCHOLAR OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ART.
DID YOU EVER SEE "LAND OF THE PHARAOHS," WITH JOAN COLLINS?
IT WASN'T A BAD MOVIE, BUT I DON'T THINK YOU WILL LEARN A GREAT DEAL ABOUT ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CULTURE FROM I[illegible]

more often than not committed in the name of a global struggle, and you could bring them back from the periphery and lay them before someone in Washington or in Moscow—someone who held the purse strings, or who feared being stigmatized. But this is less effective where people are abusing human rights in the name of some particular ethnic or religious group—in other words, where abuses are local."

We asked what might work in such cases.

Mr. Roth had no ten-point plan. "What I am sure of is that there is nothing 'natural' about what has been going on in Bosnia, or in India, with its intra-communal violence," he said. "Contrary to conventional wisdom, these communal conflicts are caused by governments and political groups that foment strife for their own political gain. Our goal is to insure that those responsible for these atrocities face at least dismissal from office and, whenever possible, criminal prosecution and punishment. Part of our job will be to provide people with the necessary historical context of what is going on. And for this we will need more specialists, experts with language skills. It's not enough to simply be committed to human rights and to know how to catalogue prisoners." Mr. Roth paused, and then laughed. "If I walked into these offices today with the qualifications I had when I started out in human-rights work, I wouldn't get a job."

Mr. Roth is a graduate of the Yale law school (class of 1980). Before joining Human Rights Watch as deputy director, he spent four years working in the United States Attorney's office in New York under our mayor-elect, Rudolph Giuliani, and then did a five-month stint in the office of the special prosecutor investigating the Iran-Contra scandal. Over the years, he has also found time to do a good deal of pro-bono work—work that has ranged from monitoring human-rights violations after the declaration of martial law in Poland in 1981 to representing a Haitian seeking asylum in America. When we asked what had moved him to become involved in such projects, he told us about his father, a German-Jewish refugee who came to this country when he was twelve years old.

"It was the custom in our family for my father to give us haircuts in the bathroom," he recalled. "As he would clip our hair, he would tell us stories about the Nazis. So I suppose I grew up not only thinking that rights were important but also seeing governments as at least the potential source of ultimate evil. And, in some way, I think I always knew I would use whatever skills I acquired as a check on government."

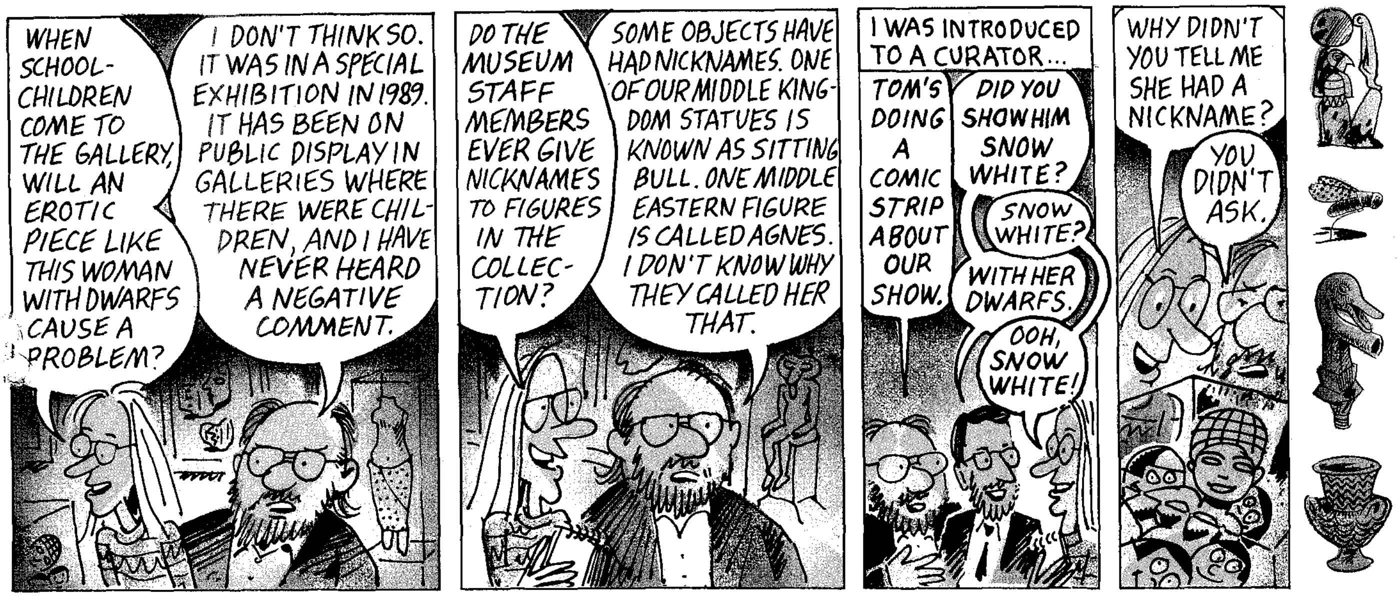
Mr. Roth understands that his skills will also be tested by challenges down the hall, so to speak. As his organization's director, he succeeds Aryeh Neier, who defined the voice and the reach not only of Human Rights Watch but of a generation of activists here as well as abroad. Mr. Neier left his post earlier this year to run the international foundation network of the billionaire financier George Soros, and we have heard it said that one of the reasons for Mr. Neier's move was his growing frustration with bearing witness—with watching, as a human-rights activist, what was happening in, for example, Bosnia, when what was required, to his thinking, was intervention. The issue of intervention had surfaced at Human Rights Watch last winter, when Rakiya Omaar, a consultant to Africa Watch, publicly disagreed with the organization's call—which was very much Mr. Neier's position—for troops to be sent to Somalia. As a result, Ms. Omaar was fired. There have been internal squabbles about other issues, too, most recently that of the decision by the organization's board to elevate Mr. Roth to the executive-director post. (There was said to be sentiment for the director of Helsinki Watch, Jeri Laber.)

As our meeting with Mr. Roth drew to a close, we asked him whether all the turmoil—out there and closer to home—was bringing on that creeping sense of despair we have found to afflict so many of those who devote themselves to the cause of human rights.

"Not at all," he replied emphatically. "The way to overcome all this is to keep focussed on what can and will be done. The fight itself keeps me going."

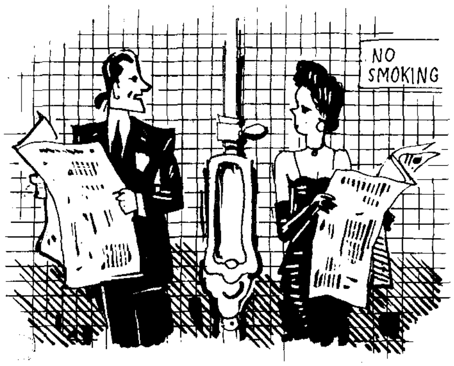
IN THE TOILET, REDEFINED

On the evening of November 23rd, in the men's room at the Walter Kerr Theatre, while the Broadway première of "Perestroika," the second


WHEN SCHOOLCHILDREN COME TO THE GALLERY, WILL AN EROTIC PIECE LIKE THIS WOMAN WITH DWARFS CAUSE A PROBLEM?
I DON'T THINK SO. IT WAS IN A SPECIAL EXHIBITION IN 1989. IT HAS BEEN ON PUBLIC DISPLAY IN GALLERIES WHERE THERE WERE CHILDREN, AND I HAVE NEVER HEARD A NEGATIVE COMMENT.
DO THE MUSEUM STAFF MEMBERS EVER GIVE NICKNAMES TO FIGURES IN THE COLLECTION?
SOME OBJECTS HAVE HAD NICKNAMES. ONE OF OUR MIDDLE KINGDOM STATUES IS KNOWN AS SITTING BULL. ONE MIDDLE EASTERN FIGURE IS CALLED AGNES. I DON'T KNOW WHY THEY CALLED HER THAT.
I WAS INTRODUCED TO A CURATOR...
TOM'S DOING A COMIC STRIP ABOUT OUR SHOW.
DID YOU SHOW HIM SNOW WHITE?
SNOW WHITE?
WITH HER DWARFS.
OOH, SNOW WHITE!
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME SHE HAD A NICKNAME?
YOU DIDN'T ASK.

part of Tony Kushner's "Angels in America," was still receiving its lengthy standing ovation, we got a fleeting glimpse of what we took to be one of the theatre world's newest (and strangest) traditions. "Perestroika" 's eager producers, a collection of formally attired men *and* women, had assembled in the upstairs gents and were reading the *Times*' review of the play—the first edition of the paper having appeared before the three-and-a-half-hour performance ended. (They'd done the same thing last spring, when "Millennium Approaches," the first part of "Angels," opened.)

The presence of the producers—whose three-million-one-hundred-thousand-dollar production is "the costliest straight play in the history of the theatre," according to one of them, Rocco Landesman, the panjandrum of Jujamcyn Theatres, which owns the Walter Kerr—did not stop the paying customers from using the facilities. But this new habit of public-bathroom reading has already caused a problem for the show's press agent, Chris Boneau, as we learned at the opening-night party for "Perestroika," held at Laura Belle, on West Forty-third Street. Mr. Boneau related how he had recently suggested to an Off Broadway producer that he read the reviews to *his* show in the men's room. "He thought that I was trying to pick him up," Mr. Boneau said.



YOKO ONO, 13 A.D.

"SEE, that's the Imagine circle," Yoko Ono told a visitor the other morning, pointing almost straight down from the window of her living room, in the Dakota, to Strawberry Fields, the three-and-a-half-acre triangle of Central Park that, thanks to her donation of a million dollars, was, in 1985, beautifully restored and landscaped, and dedicated to the memory of John Lennon. "See—that white circle," she said. From seven stories up, it was too far away to read the word "Imagine" set in the middle of a sunburst-patterned Italian-marble disk, but the view of the curving pathway into the Park was unobstructed. "Many of the fans like to have their wedding ceremony there," Yoko said. "And, of course, on John's birthday, October 9th, the fans gather there."

Yoko Ono frequently uses the word "fans," with its faint echo of Beatlemania, when she talks about the legacy of her husband, who was murdered at the Seventy-second Street entrance to the Dakota thirteen years ago this week. Speaking in her capacity as the steward of his memory, she tends to be formal and cautious, saying things she has clearly said many times before. But as she sat on the edge of a white sofa the other morning, sipping black coffee and chain-smoking, Yoko relaxed and began to drop her careful diplomatic mask, becoming by turns vulnerable, maternal, and oracular.

She is sixty years old, and she looked great. In photographs from past decades, her face often appeared round, but now it looked much thinner. Wearing rimless spectacles, and with her hair pulled back, Yoko is more than ever John Lennon's feminine twin. She was dressed in a black silk blouse and black jeans, and had nothing on her feet. Visitors are asked to remove their shoes at the door. It was John's idea, she said, in order to preserve the carpet; a Japanese host, she added, would not impose this custom on Americans. The apartment walls, the piano, and nearly everything else, except the sculpture and paintings, are white, including the carpet.

Asking Yoko Ono about her sense of time passing, about what thirteen years feels like, brought an answer that made it seem like no time at all. "What happened in '80 was something that made a lot of people sad," she said, before lighting a cigarette. "After that, they wanted a lot of John's products out. At the time, of course, it was damned if you do, damned if you don't. When I assumed the position of the widow, which I was—which I am, actually—people would stick me with an ugly name like 'professional widow.' It was like—what is the term?—'ripping off.' At the same time, if I hadn't assumed the position and responsibility for putting John's products out, they would also have been unhappy."

Most of the Lennon products—recordings, film footage, and art—have by now been released, and, as the stereotypes (domineering succubus, the meddling woman who broke up the Beatles) have faded, Yoko Ono herself has begun to be appreciated again as an artist and a musician in her own right. A six-CD collection, "Onobox," was released last year, and her work from the fifties and sixties—work done mostly as a member of the proto-conceptual-art group Fluxus—has been included in a number of recent museum exhibitions. In March, she will make her début as a musical-theatre composer when her rock opera, "New York Rock," is produced at the W.P.A. Theatre.

Yoko seemed genuinely surprised by this resurgence. "I'm very much one of those artists with a van Gogh complex," she said, "and that saved me, in a way, because I would often think it's a norm in an artist's life to be unappreciated and attacked while she is alive. Something like the 'Onobox'—I never dreamed that it would come out in my lifetime. When there was a tremendous need and demand for John's work, I never felt that I should compete with that—it was no use. So I thought, Maybe that's my fate: that my work has finally been killed and is never going to come out."

When she was asked about the premise of her rock opera, her reply was somewhat vague. "New York is the city that inspired me," she said. "It's a violent city. But, in a way, all cities in all countries are violent now. In the opera, a man and a woman meet and they fall in love, and they have their incredible euphoric moment, but violence hits them. But love endures. There's a little boy involved, too. I know it sounds very autobiographical, but it isn't really about John and Yoko. It's about a man and a woman, and a pocket of warmth in a violent city."

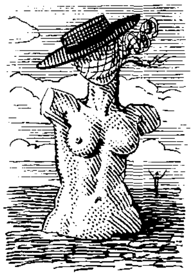
She paused and lit another cigarette, then said, "Years ago, I actually went through the experience of thinking, because of the violence, Oh dear, should I really move away from New York? That was right after John was shot. I felt that maybe, for the safety of our son, Sean, I should move out of town. But even then I couldn't think of another city that was safe. And, because we loved the city so much, and John had loved his time in the city so much, I decided that this was our home, and we should stay here."

As it turns out, Sean is doing fine, and his mother's voice brightens when she talks about him. "He's eighteen, and he goes to Columbia University—he's a freshman there," she said. "He just started, and he's very excited. He wouldn't think of leaving New York, and I was very pleased about that, obviously, for many reasons. It's great watching him stretch his brain, but, actually, he wants to be a musician, and he's quite a musician already. He plays the guitar and piano, and he contributed two guitar solos in the 'Onobox,' but he didn't want his name used, so I'm not telling you which tracks."

Yoko seemed as amazed as anyone about the way the world has changed since 1980. "What was incredible about John's simple messages was that they really cut across a very wide group of people—the human race, as a matter of fact," she said. "Those very simple messages, peace and love, have been tested many times in the past decade or so. The Berlin Wall fell, and the Soviet Union is no more, and the Cold War is over: all that is beautiful."

Her politics are also local, however, and when she talked about the establishment of Strawberry Fields she was proud and proprietary, like a satisfied gardener surveying her front yard. "About a week before John's death, we did this filming for a music video we were making, and we filmed ourselves there," she said. "We said to each other, 'This is such a sorry spot'—it was so desolate, and nobody was caring for it. I said, 'Well, shall we donate some grass, or something?' John said, 'Yeah, that's a good idea.' Of course, I didn't know it was going to be like this at the time. When it was designated Strawberry Fields, I thought, Maybe I'll donate some cherry trees from Japan and some shrubs from England, to represent me and John. Then I remembered that when we got together initially we sent acorns to all the heads of state, asking them to plant them and let them grow into trees. I thought that, karmically, all those trees are supposed to be growing, even if it's just on a conceptual level. So I decided to ask all the countries of the world to donate trees or shrubs or stones to this place, so that it would be an international garden. I put that message, that plea, in the newspapers, and right away we got all these replies saying, 'Yes, we will.' So many seeds that we planted I'm seeing grow, which is really a reward. I wish I could share that with John, but I'm sure John knows it, somewhere. Somewhere, I'm sure, John is seeing it all happen."

WHAT A HAT CAN SAY



We dropped by the Millinery Information Bureau's fourth annual display of spring hats the other day, and, maybe because the event was held in the western reaches of SoHo, at the big, loft-like offices of the New York Foundation for the Arts, but more probably because of the hats we saw, we thought not one bit about how hats are supposed to save our skin from ultraviolet rays, but somehow couldn't get out of our head that Surrealist chapeau Dali created out of one black high-heeled shoe. If the city's modistes have their way, women around town next spring will be fetishizing, historicizing, and self-aggrandizing from the forehead up—which is pretty much what has been going on since the mid-eighties, when millinery sales began taking off, growing about fifteen per cent a year.

Among the dozens of hats on exhibit were a twenties-style cloche of basket-weave straw, by Sondra Redmon; an astonishingly grand Edwardian-feeling black-horsehair headdress festooned with large pink silk roses, by Kokin; a shiny black straw coolie, by Patricia Underwood, that was just *made* to be photographed by Irving Penn; and a four-cornered number fashioned of tightly woven real and synthetic hair, [illegible] Curbeon International. (O.K., maybe that's where Dali came in.) We were invited to try on different centuries, different temperaments, different genders; with this hat or that, we could invite a passerby to imagine we were younger or older, richer or poorer, kinky or even kinkier. A self on display, in play: that's what a hat says, however sternly it addresses the sun. ♦

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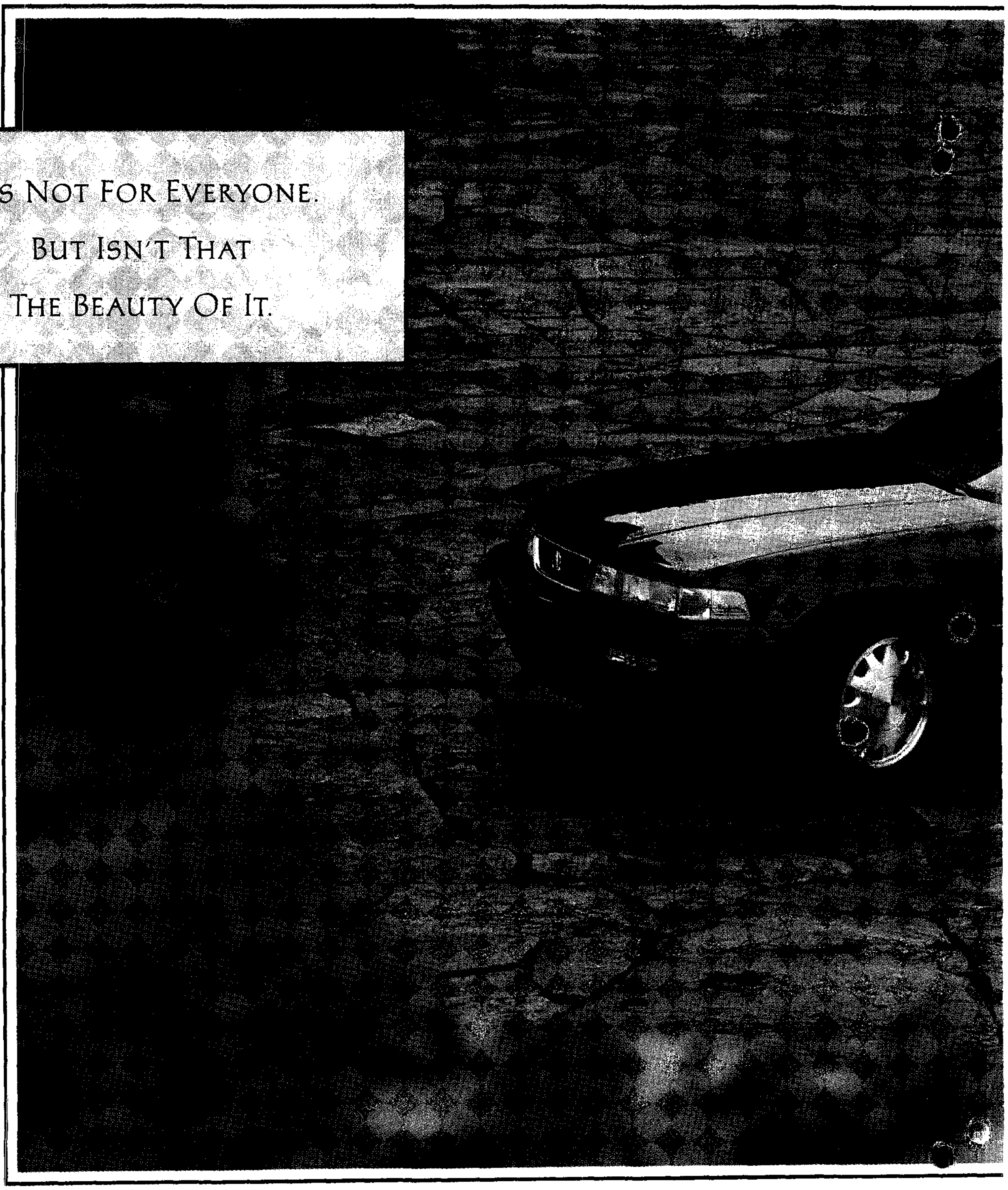

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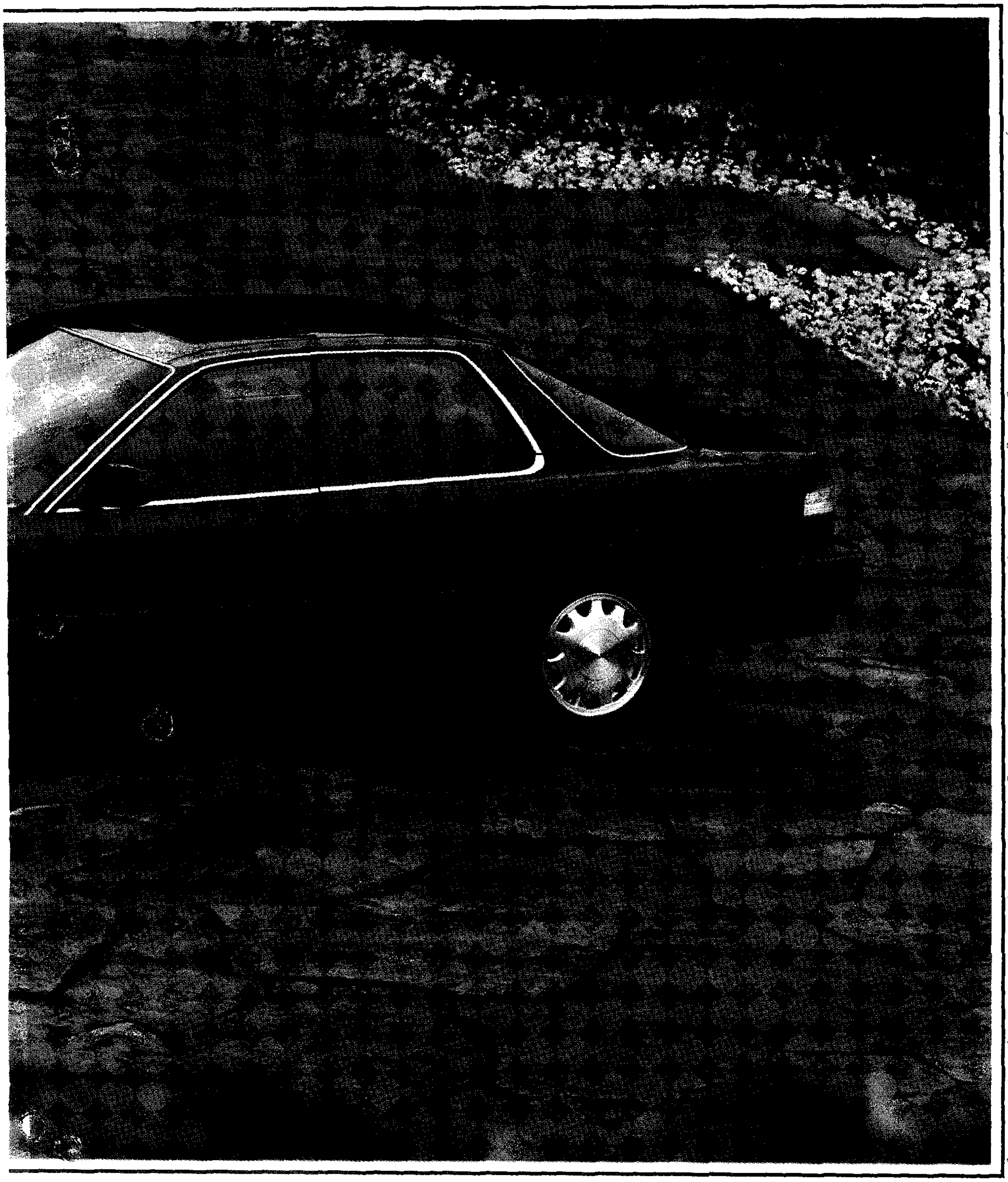

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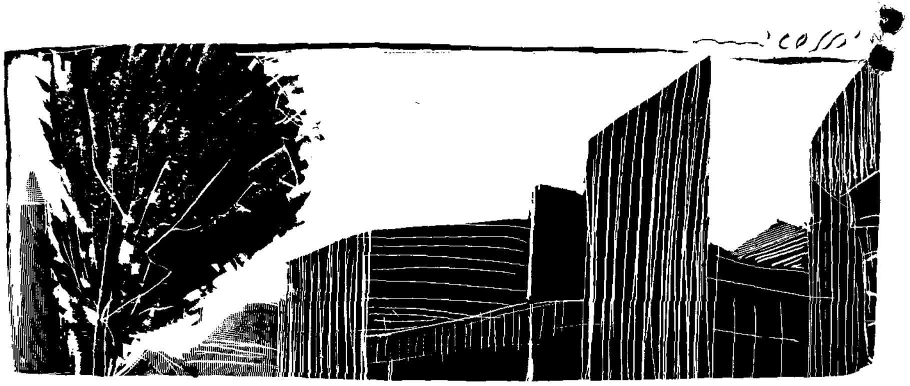
LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

ED ROLLINS' SPIN CYCLE

Has Rollins finally spun out of control with his bizarre claims about Christine Todd Whitman's campaign?

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL



After the gubernatorial election in New Jersey, on November 2nd, the winner took a victory lap in Washington. The person who appeared on the talk shows and was fêted at the dinner parties here was not Christine Todd Whitman, the successful candidate, but Edward J. Rollins, her campaign manager. In the capital, the election was seen as more than the victory of a tax-cutting Republican over a tax-raising Democrat, a Ronald Reagan surrogate over a Bill Clinton surrogate. It was a personal and professional vindication of Rollins, who had had the good luck to be Reagan's campaign manager in 1984 and the misfortune to be one of Ross Perot's in 1992. He moved from "Larry King Live" to "John McLaughlin's One on One" in a state of apparent euphoria. Then, on November 9th, he performed in his new starring role as the Republican analyst on NBC's "Today" show, and later that morning was the featured guest at the Sperling Breakfast—a weekly institution, presided over for the past twenty-eight years by Godfrey Sperling, the bureau chief emeritus of the *Christian Science Monitor*, at which a political figure holds forth over toast and coffee in a hotel function room with journalists, who subsequently write stories quoting the figure's remarks "at a breakfast with reporters." That evening, Rollins ran late leaving the downtown office of the Rollins Company, his consulting firm, for a fund-raiser at the Capitol Hill Club, because he had to return a number of phone calls.

"Why the press calls?" Sal Russo, a former partner of his, who was accompanying him, asked.

"Something I said this morning," Rollins replied.

"What was it?"

"Oh, nothing."

The fund-raiser was for Pat Nolan, a California assemblyman under federal indictment for racketeering, conspiracy, extortion, and money laundering. Rollins shared co-host billing with Lyn Nofziger, his mentor, who had been convicted in the Wedtech scandal (his conviction was later overturned), and he opened his remarks with the jest, "I'm the only guy of the three of us who hasn't been indicted."

He still hasn't been. But within days of his remarks at the Sperling Breakfast he and the Whitman campaign were the subject of numerous state and federal investigations. What Rollins had said into the humming tape recorders to cause such an uproar was that the New Jersey race had been bought with the sum of half a million dollars. "We went into black churches and we basically said [illegible] ministers who had endorsed Florio"—Jim Florio, the Democratic incumbent—" 'Do you have a special project?' And they said, 'We've already endorsed Florio.' We said, 'That's fine; don't get up on the Sunday pulpit and preach. We know you've endorsed him, but don't get up there and say, "It's your moral obligation that you go on Tuesday to vote for Jim Florio." ' " And Rollins elaborated: "We said to some of their key workers,

MARIO MICOSSI

'How much have they paid you to do your normal duty? Well, we'll match it; go home, sit and watch television,' and I think to a certain extent we suppressed their vote." ("God damn!" James Carville, who had been Florio's consultant, said to me on the phone a couple of hours after the event. "What the hell is going on here?")

Rollins, astonished by the furor he had created, announced his defense: that he was a liar. In a deposition held in Washington for the United States District Court in New Jersey on November 19th, he pleaded that his description of himself as a liar be believed, while also depicting himself as the aggrieved party and appealing to pity: "The problem with politics today is people like Ed Rollins get far too much play. . . . I mean, it's to a point where I've—you know, I thought of putting a gun to my head. . . . If I thought for one single moment this was going to go this way, I would have never mentioned it. This was an inside-the-Beltway bullshit game that I've become the victim of."

At any given moment, it's midnight in Washington for someone. Interest in this case centered on the confounding notion of Rollins as liar, because he had been thought of as having a penchant for unvarnished honesty. He was "a compulsive truth teller," according to *Time*. "He could be the first political consultant who specialized in telling the truth," *Newsweek* declared. Reporter after reporter described him on the Washington talk shows as an honest man.

"Here's a man who calls himself a liar and nobody believes him," the perplexed Speaker of the House, Thomas P. Foley, told me.

The image of the political genius undone by hubris was not, however, held dear by many of his peers and former clients. Among them, another image is more vivid—that of a man who has alienated many of those he has worked with; has slandered and betrayed his colleagues out of self-aggrandizement; and had never been attached to a winning statewide campaign until New Jersey. "Isn't it coincidence how the Joey Buttafuoco and Ed Rollins stories were on the same page for a week?" Doug Watts, another of Rollins' former partners, says. "Ed is always advancing his own position ahead of the client's. But to a large extent, the image of Ed as honest and candid is what the media perpetuated over time. To that extent, Ed *is* a victim. These guys are eulogizing not the death of a great political warrior but the death of a great source." Richard Bond, a former chairman of the Republican National Committee, says, "In the culture of Washington, you don't need to be successful, you just need to look and sound successful in the image you project. Rollins, in particular, had, up until his final utterance, mastered that skill." Stuart Spencer, perhaps the most important Republican consultant of them all—he got Reagan elected governor and hovered nearby during his career, and was also a mentor to James Baker—says, "Fame has destroyed a lot of people. It's like booze. You get addicted to it, you got a problem. That town, it's made up of that, and Ed thrives on it. It captures a lot of people. And his wife loves it—that's a factor. Ed was a media creation. He needed them. He wanted them. When you become a media creation, mythdom starts."

The myth of Ed Rollins was a compound of his method and his identity. "I have a reputation for being candid," he once boasted to a reporter. And he remarked to the Washington *Post*, "I have to tell you, it's awful to always be right." His modus operandi was to play back to reporters their own unremarkable judgments: Reagan was ignorant, Nancy mean, Bush out of touch. With Rollins' name (or an unnamed "senior official") attached to it, the obvious became newsworthy. To journalists, Rollins seemed a risktaker, an iconoclast, not bound by mere partisan loyalty. He was like a journalist himself, devoted to getting the facts out. His contempt always had an eager audience.

Superficially, his denigrations seemed to cause him nothing but grief. "What stage in the cycle is Rollins in now?" Lee Atwater, who was his deputy and nemesis, used to ask, according to a former Atwater associate. The "cycle"—an Atwater coinage—inevitably began with Rollins "showing off to reporters," the associate explained. "Day Two, the world caves in on him. The next two weeks, he doesn't talk. He's incommunicado. In the third week, he begins gingerly to talk. He's in control. He does fine. Then he does it again. There would be longer and shorter cycles, but there was always the cycle." The cycle was not, however, a series of unmitigated fiascoes; it was the means of Rollins' advancement.

The pathology of Rollins' success was rooted not only in what he said but in who he said he was: the salt of the earth, a genetic Democrat, who had worked for the famous liberal California Speaker of the Assembly Jesse Unruh, and had supported Robert F. Kennedy in 1968,

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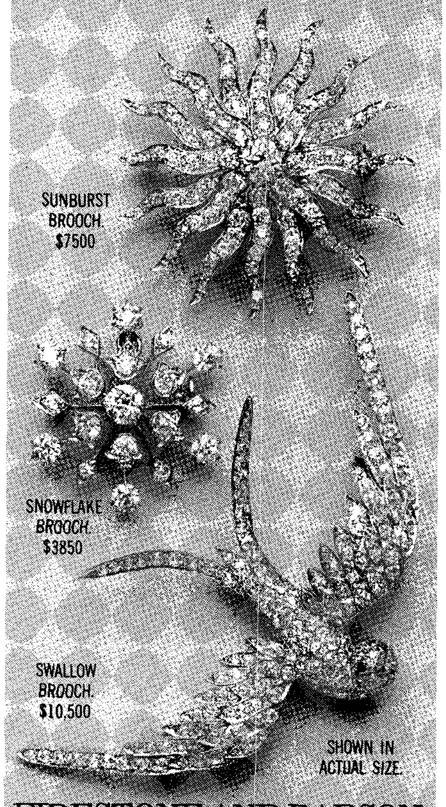

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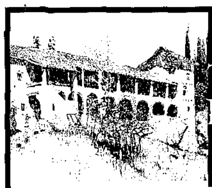

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but had become disillusioned with liberalism because of antiwar disruptions.

Rollins' identity as a "Reagan Democrat"—the label he constantly applied to himself—was central to his place in Washington. He was a representative of the key constituency that had shifted politics to the right. To converse with Rollins was to commune with this volatile force. The honest man was also the authentic man.

EDWARD J. ROLLINS grew up as the son of a Navy-shipyard electrician, in Vallejo, California. He attended California State University at Chico, excelled as a boxer there, becoming an alternate on the 1964 United States Olympic team, and was student-government president. He also participated in a special state program that brought students to Sacramento to serve as internes in the Speaker's office. (Jesse Unruh was then the Speaker.) Rollins became friendly there with a Republican assemblyman named Ray Johnson, and was hired as one of Johnson's assistants. Though he was working for a Republican, the Kennedys were household idols in his family, and when Robert Kennedy ran for President, Rollins favored him. But he continued moving along a Republican path. After the G.O.P. gained control of the Assembly, in the 1968 elections, according to Doug Watts, Rollins joined what was called the Republican Consultants' Staff, under the direction of the new G.O.P. Speaker, Robert Monaghan.

In 1969, an administrator at Washington University, in St. Louis, who had met Rollins at Chico State, hired him as a student-activities coördinator. One of Rollins' supervisors there, Trudi Spigel, says, "He wasn't a real academic, he didn't have a faculty appointment, he didn't teach any students. He made appointments." For an undergraduate urban-studies program, Rollins' task was to schedule meetings with city officials and at municipal institutions. On campus, he was also a dormitory master—and, at times, a police informer. There were many demonstrations against the Vietnam War, and the same day four students at Kent State were killed by the Ohio National Guard, in May of 1970, an R.O.T.C. building was burned down at Washington University. During this period, administrators there were required to "identify students to the police," Spigel says. "Photos were brought. There were meetings with police. I had an F.B.I. agent assigned to me. I assume the others did, too. It was anguish for me. Rollins already had a set attitude. It was not painful for him to do this. It would be very strange to say it traumatized him. He never had difficulties naming people."

Rollins, at the chancellor's order, patrolled the campus every night. He worked closely with a contingent of F.B.I. agents, and he testified at a grand-jury inquest that resulted in a trial [illegible] which several students were convicted. His experience contributed to his growing conservatism.

Rollins got in touch with Robert Monaghan, back in Sacramento, and arranged to work for Richard Nixon's reëlection in California. So, in 1972, Rollins served as Monaghan's assistant, conducting Nixon's Presidential campaign in about a quarter of the state. Monaghan received a post-election appointment as an Assistant Secretary of Transportation, and he brought Rollins with him to Washington. When Nixon resigned because of the Watergate scandal, Monaghan departed as well, returning home as the president of the California Manufacturers Association, and Rollins eventually returned to be his assistant. But less than a year later Rollins went back to Washington, squirrelling himself into a corner of the bureaucracy as deputy superintendent to the dean of faculty of the government's National Fire Academy. In 1979, he received a call from his friends Sal Russo and Doug Watts. They were working with the newly elected minority leader in the California Assembly, Carol Hallett, and she desperately needed to hire a chief of staff for the Republican Caucus. "I'm hiding out in the Carter Administration. They've discovered me. I'm about to get bounced," Rollins said, according to Russo.

"I was hiring someone who had been a Republican since college days," Hallett says. "There's no doubt about it. He had worked in the Republican Caucus as a Republican long before he came to work for me."

Rollins had authority for, among other things, dispersal of the minority leader's campaign fund for legislative candidates. Hallett had raised what was then a large figure—a million dollars—and she ordered Rollins not to exceed it in outlays. After Election Day, she discovered that he had run up a debt of more than a quarter of a million dollars. Hallett spent a good deal of time afterward raising money to pay off the debt; Rollins was off to Washington again. This time, he became an assistant to Lyn Nofziger, who had worked as a consultant to Hallett after being hatcheted in an early Reagan-campaign purge. Now Nofziger was the White House political director.

Rollins had gone from utter obscurity as a no-name Ford holdover in the Carter Administration to the political cockpit of the Reagan White House without ever managing a campaign. Almost at once, he established his reputation as a tough operator. The first occurrence of the cycle took place in 1981. About pressuring Senator Roger Jepsen, a Republican from Iowa, to vote for selling AWACS airplanes to Saudi Arabia, Rollins bragged, "We just beat his brains out. We stood him up in front of an open grave and told him he could jump in if he wanted to." With that, Rollins drew sharp attention. Jepsen lost his next election.

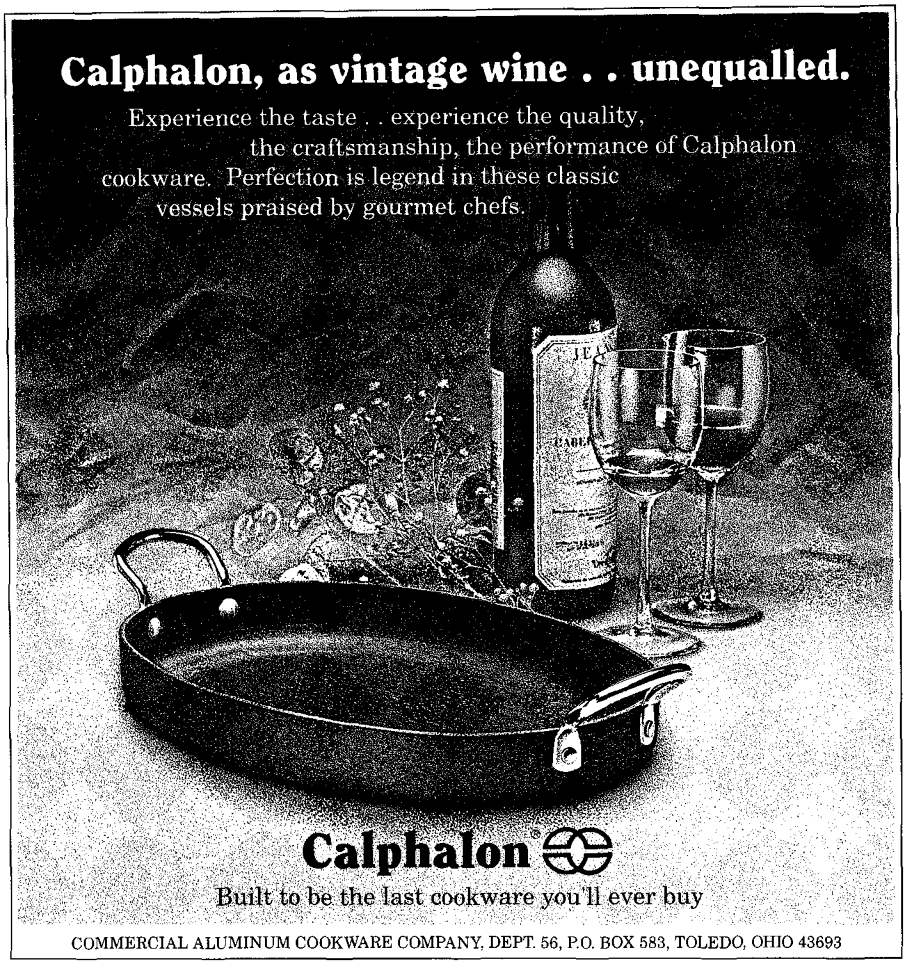
Nofziger, having run into conflict with Nancy Reagan, and disliking the bureaucratic regimen, lasted only about a year in his job. The succession involved intense machinations. "To get to the bottom of Rollins, you have to get to the bottom of Atwater," a Republican politico declares. Lee Atwater was a ferociously ambitious political prodigy, willing to do almost anything but too young to get himself named White House political director. Atwater touted Rollins for the job. His plan, he told friends, was to get himself installed as deputy to someone he thought he could manipulate. Ultimately, James Baker and Michael Deaver, the "pragmatists" in the Reagan White House, settled on Rollins, who appeared to have Reaganite credentials by virtue of his association with Nofziger. Thus Rollins rose. Rollins told others that he thought of himself as Atwater's godfather in the White House.

"There was not a lot of trust in that relationship," Sal Russo says. "Lee had a relationship with Baker. There were cross channels, a lot of weird things going on."

"Atwater was Rollins," one of Atwater's friends maintains. "He did all his work. Rollins is not a hard worker. He's very lazy. Atwater took advantage of that."

Almost the instant Rollins got the job, the cycle kicked in. Maureen Reagan, the President's daughter, was running for the Senate in California. "The highest negatives of any candidate I've ever seen," Rollins proclaimed.

"Get him off my back," she told her father, and he summoned Rollins to the



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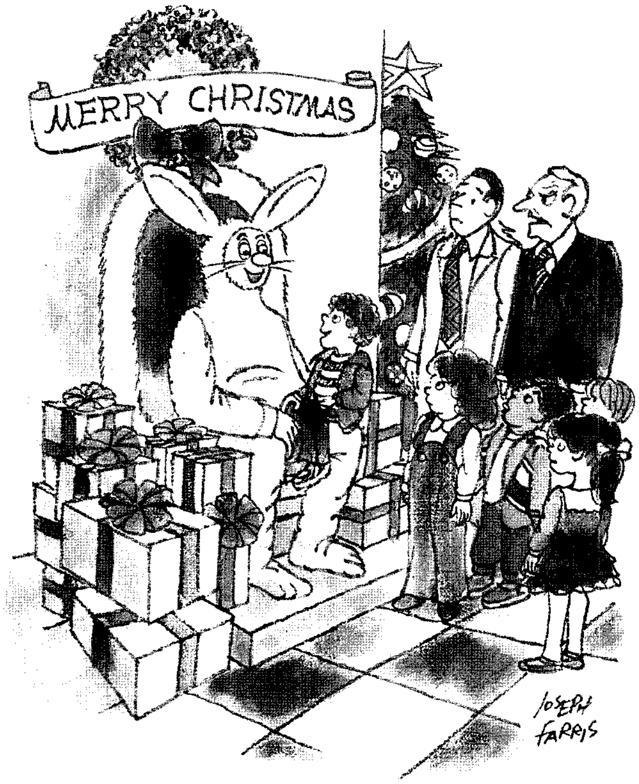

"Who hired him?"

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Oval Office. "I thought I was going to get my head handed to me, but the President was very understanding," Rollins said afterward. Nofziger explained to me recently, "Sometimes, Reagan had to be disturbed on the surface, so his children would leave him alone."

Over the next year, the cycle ran its course several times, but that did not prevent the naming of Rollins, in October of 1983, as Reagan's reëlection-campaign manager. "Baker, Deaver, and I decided upon Rollins," Stuart Spencer says. "My position with Rollins was that I would sign off if Atwater was his deputy. It worked. Ed did a lot of press stuff. And Jim Lake"—the campaign press secretary—"handled him pretty well. It was an opportunity for Rollins to have a learning experience."

"I don't know what Ed did," Deaver says. "He wasn't involved with me on issues of the President's schedule and advertising."

Rollins told many people that he had been in charge and that the others were taking credit where it was not due.

"Ed survived because Lee kept Ed out of trouble," a former Atwater associate says. "He spent a third of his time keeping Ed from blowing himself up, time and time again." Atwater did not always restrain him, however. When Walter Mondale named Geraldine Ferraro as his running mate, Rollins anatomized the choice to the press: "The biggest bust politically in recent years." Campaign officials quickly declared that Rollins was innocent of a double-entendre.

"Just about everybody else lives off their reflected power," Rollins remarked a few years later about those in Washington who orbit around those who are elected. In 1984, stardust from Reagan's forty-nine-state landslide fell on Rollins. His status came from his proximity to this magical power, which imbued him with an aura of a political master which he would probably have not had otherwise.

After the campaign, Rollins, though he had depicted himself to reporters as its captain, was virtually cast adrift. He asked to be named to, and was considered for, various positions: chairman of the Republican National Committee, Postmaster General, Secretary of Labor, even Ambassador to Australia—all denied. At last, the new chief of staff, Donald Regan, appointed him to a loftier version of his former position as the White House political director. His tenure lasted only until September of 1985, and for two years afterward he was a constant source of stories on how Regan's dictatorial ways made Reagan "more and more distracted and detached"—Rollins' words to reporters, on the record. Shortly after leaving the White House, Rollins united with Russo and Watts in a consulting company they had formed.

In 1986, Rollins, Russo, and Watts were hired to run the Maryland Senate campaign of Linda Chavez, a former White House aide, against the incumbent, Barbara Mikulski. "He was an absentee landlord," Chavez says. "He promised he would be personally involved and disappeared." After Chavez won the Republican nomination, Rollins gave a briefing to big Republican donors at the Old Executive Office Building, telling them that Chavez stood no chance of winning. "Have you cashed my check before you've started kicking me?" Chavez inquired. Rollins suggested that Chavez could end on a positive note if she wished to run again in Maryland, or go negative, to become a conservative darling. At her consultants' urging, she approved commercials that attacked Mikulski, a single woman, for hiring a woman who was a Marxist and "anti-male." Rollins told the press, "It's great to run a campaign on the high road"—that is, if you're ahead. Chavez lost badly. In retrospect, she says, "Ed is constantly rationalizing what might be considered his failure. The fear that the failure might be attributed to him made him disloyal."

Eventually, Rollins, Russo, and Watts dissolved their company, and Rollins joined Jim Lake's public-affairs firm, earning a salary of about four hundred thousand dollars, with a hundred and fifty thousand more in honoraria—the wages of celebrity.

As early as the 1984 campaign, Rollins fixed his ambition on Vice-President George Bush. "He tried to make a convert of me to Bush's side," Jim Lake says. "He wanted me to be for Bush in '88." But Rollins' deputy, Atwater, who sought the job of 1988 campaign manager for himself, turned from saving Rollins to drowning him. Atwater made certain that Bush learned of every unpleasant incident in Rollins' past: the California debt, the insults, the disloyalty. It was no struggle at all: Atwater wound up at the helm of Bush's yacht, with Rollins swamped in its wake.

Senator Paul Laxalt, of Nevada, as-

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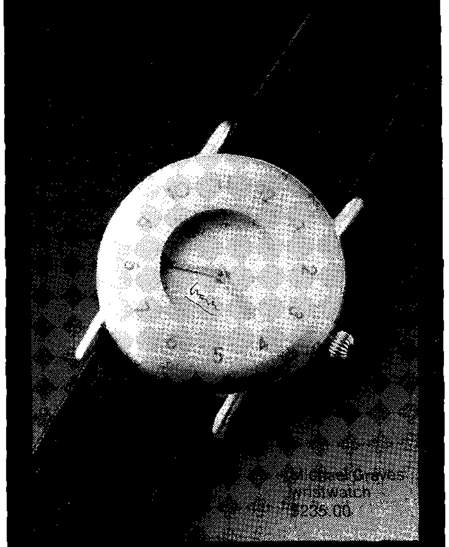

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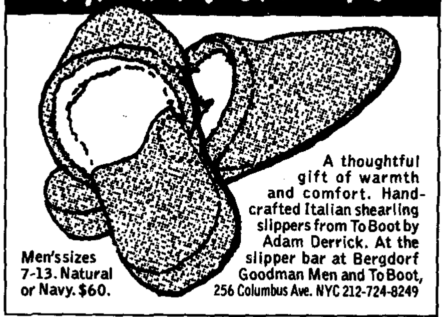

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sumed that Rollins would manage *his* Presidential campaign. While Laxalt dithered over whether to make the race, Rollins got himself named the chairman of Jack Kemp's campaign. "The greatest political stab in the back in history," Laxalt remarked.

Kemp was immensely grateful for Rollins' presence, seeing him as an emblem of Reaganism. But one of Kemp's advisers says, "Ed was strictly a figurehead. He didn't do a lot. When he showed up, he would say a few words, and that's about it. Kemp thought Rollins was a Reagan powerhouse." A year later, Bush was in the White House, and he was unforgiving toward those who had worked for Kemp.

But a shaft of light appeared. Representative Guy Vander Jagt, of Michigan, the chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee, wanted a director with a national reputation. At the beginning of 1989, he signed Rollins to a four-year deal, for roughly two hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year. "The hardest assignment for Ed was the N.R.C.C. job, because it was a real job," a former G.O.P. official says. "He thought he had cut a great deal." Rollins at once threw into jeopardy the safe Wyoming House seat that had been held by the newly named Secretary of Defense, Richard Cheney, by declaring that the contest was a test of his prowess. "Wyoming is something I've had my hands on since Day One," Rollins said. He was soon attacked by the Republican candidate, Craig Thomas. "I think we'll win it, but I'll tell you this: it won't be because of any 'help' we got from Washington," Thomas said. He won a close race that should have been a rout.

Rollins' cycle operated at full tilt. For example, Rollins claimed that Speaker Thomas Foley "obviously knew what was going on" with the savings-and-loan collapse. Foley thereupon called Rollins "an out-of-control person" who was indulging in "emotional ravings." Then Rollins called the President's son Neil Bush "naïve" in his dealings with the Silverado S. & L., in Denver. President Bush was incensed. (The tension at Republican Party headquarters between Rollins and Atwater, who had become the R.N.C. chairman in 1989, was almost palpable. They were not reconciled until 1991, when Atwater was dying of a brain tumor.)

In June of 1990, when Bush abandoned his no-new-taxes pledge, Rollins faxed to Republican candidates the following instruction: "Do not hesitate to oppose either the President or proposals being advanced in Congress." Then he told the Washington *Post*, "All of a sudden, we're looking into an abyss," and added, "Did I spend a year and a half of my life in vain?" Bush tried to have him fired from the N.R.C.C. "I don't plan to resign," Rollins said. He insisted in his defense that he had been asked to send out the letter by the Republican leadership.

In the 1990 midterm elections, the G.O.P. lost nine House seats. On Election Night, Rollins remarked to a writer from the conservative *National Review*, after seeing the face of the just reëlected Senator Jesse Helms on a TV screen, "The only one who's stood for something." Rollins declared to reporters that Bush's theme song was "It's My Party, I'll Cry If I Want To."

"I'm not leaving my party, because I think the cause is too important," Rollins announced, pledging fealty to the G.O.P., though he disliked Bush. Rollins left the N.R.C.C. saddled with a debt of more than six million dollars. "It's a debt from which it has never recovered," a former G.O.P. official says. Rollins has claimed that the committee voted to spend the money.

Rollins now joined the Sawyer/Miller Group, a public-relations firm. He informed the Los Angeles *Times*, "You sit down with a candidate, his best friend or sister walks in, says, 'No, that's not the way.' Then maybe I don't get paid. By contrast, I sit down with a C.E.O., talk, act, and get paid well. A C.E.O. is more used to five-hundred-dollar-an-hour fees. He doesn't gulp." The cycle continued to spin. In July of 1991, at a Sperling Breakfast, Rollins remarked about the White House chief of staff, "I think John Sununu is a very bright man—at nuclear engineering." A story detailing Rollins' insults filled the Washington *Post* the next day. He still commanded ink, but at Sawyer/Miller there was trouble. "To be perfectly frank, it wasn't working out at the firm," a partner says. "Ed never brought in any business."

At the urging of his wife, Sherrie Sandy Rollins, who had just been hired to head the White House Office of Public Liaison and had gone to college with the President's son Marvin, Rollins tried to ingratiate himself with Bush. In a private letter dated March 15, 1992, he wrote, "I truly believe that you have been a great

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President and your reëlection is critical for the country and the world. . . . Mr. President, thank you for giving me the opportunity for expressing my thoughts and please know you have my support, my vote, and anything else you might ever want." But Bush's distaste for Rollins was absolute, and he remained banished.

On June 3, 1992, Rollins appeared on a hotel dais in Dallas, standing next to Hamilton Jordan, who had been Jimmy Carter's strategist, and the two were introduced as the co-managers of Ross Perot's "world-class campaign." The event led the evening news and drew front-page headlines.

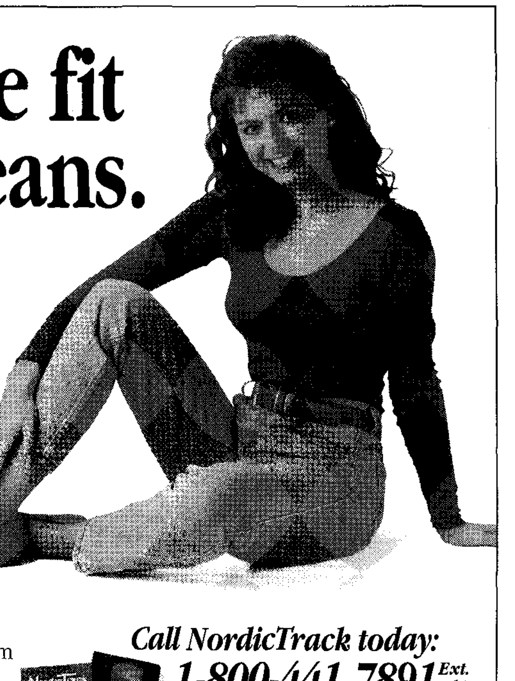
But Rollins had created a crisis within his own household. Sherrie Rollins had to resign her White House position when Ed took the offer from Perot. She had implored him not to leap. "The smartest thing Ed did was marry Sherrie. Everyone likes her," one Republican politico said recently. Sherrie was one of the legions of young Republican go-getters who had been drawn to Reagan's Washington in the early eighties, and in the flush campaign of 1984 she had got a job as an assistant press secretary. Afterward, she moved from one public-relations post to another—first for a real-estate magnate and then (through Rollins' connections) for Jack Kemp, who had become the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. Her principal job, however, was as the handler's handler. The couple gave large parties, sent out funny Christmas cards featuring their dogs, Dutch (for Reagan) and Duke (for John Wayne), and became fixtures at social functions. Whenever Rollins stirred up a storm, his wife tried to calm the waters. "I certainly don't regret marrying Ed," she told a reporter in 1990. "My only regret is not keeping my maiden name. Being Mrs. Ed Rollins has hurt me more than it's ever helped me careerwise."

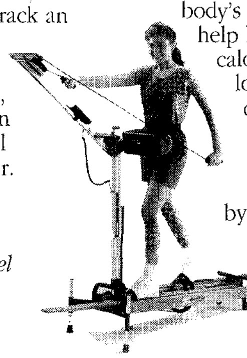
On the eve of his departure for Dallas, Rollins said at a Washington dinner party that "Perot can't govern," and that the billionaire had "authoritarian tendencies." One of his former associates says, "It was personal ambition—careerism, if you want. As soon as he got in there, he was talking to everybody about what a disaster Perot was."

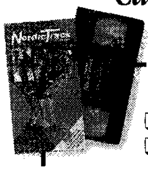
Russo joined Rollins at Perot headquarters. "After about a week, Perot withdrew to Perot Systems," Russo says. "He showed up for a couple of days, yelling at everybody all the time. He said he'd never had a negative story written about him until Ed Rollins showed up." On July 15th, Rollins quit. The next day, Perot dropped out, too.

Perot was not fatal to Rollins. In December, Rollins and his wife rented Mo Sussman's restaurant for a Christmas party. "Would they turn out for his party? Was he still a person?" the Washington *Post* columnist Mary McGrory wrote. Yes, they would and he was, and they also turned out in full force for Ed's big fiftieth-birthday bash, at Union Station in March. He had by then been engaged in Christie Whitman's campaign for several months.

WEBSTER TODD, Whitman's father, who had been an adviser to President Eisenhower, had been the New Jersey Republican chairman twice in two decades. In the 1972 Nixon campaign, his son, Webster "Dan" Todd, Jr., be-







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friended Lyn Nofziger, who helped guide his sister's political career. As manager of her race for governor Nofziger recommended Rollins. The deal was made before the 1992 Republican Convention. Rollins' first act was to hire a media consultant—Larry McCarthy, who had produced the notorious Willie Horton spots to help the Bush campaign in 1988. McCarthy's appointment raised a furor, and within a day Whitman felt compelled to let him resign. Through months of subsequent bungling, she fell fifteen points behind the unpopular Florio. About a month before Election Day, in a desperate ploy, Whitman announced that Rollins would become her full-time manager, as though he had not been central to her campaign before that moment. The significant new element, in fact, was that Michael Murphy, a media consultant, successfully developed Whitman's themes and produced pointed commercials. Whitman won by a whisker—less than thirty thousand votes out of two and a half million.

After the great victory, Rollins explained that he had won the Whitman campaign on the ground, not in the air. Murphy, who kept silent in public, told a friend, "I can't believe it. Rollins is out of control." At a Washington dinner party in early November with the retired columnist Rowland Evans, and with John Reilly, a lawyer and a longtime Democratic political figure, and his wife, Margaret Warner, of "The MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour," Rollins boasted about how he had bought off black ministers and campaign workers. "Absolutely," Reilly told me. "That's what he said."

Rollins also repeated the story to Mary Matalin, Atwater's former deputy at the R.N.C., who was about to marry James Carville. Then, at the Sperling Breakfast, for at least the third time, he told his strange tale.

Some Republicans close to the New Jersey campaign believe that Rollins tainted the victory in order to prevent Murphy from getting credit, and they wonder whether, in his competition with Carville, he was contending with the ghost of Atwater. Democrats believe that Rollins was telling some version of the truth, but that none of the several investigations would ever unearth it. They suspected that the source of the bribes was untraceable money from the National Rifle Association, which had been gunning for Florio.

In his deposition of November 19th, Rollins explained that the reason he had lied was "the super-consultant game." He went on, "Carville didn't have the guts to stand up—and no one else from the Florio campaign—and say they got their butts whipped fair and square," and he said later, "He made my life miserable for weeks. I was trying to make his life miserable for a few weeks." Rollins' testimony was, above all, an effort to protect, and even embellish, his myth. He was the Reagan Democrat to top all Reagan Democrats: "I have spent my entire life as a civil-rights worker." Rollins was not only the pluperfect Reagan Democrat—he had ascended to the status of the Gipper himself. "In this world of political consultants, I had a star quality, and I had people interested in meeting me as much as meeting [Whitman] in some Republican events, and I did the same thing my old boss Ronald Reagan used to do, I'd shake hands, smile, act like I was your lifelong friend, and move on," he said.

His self-encomiums were interrupted by questions about whether he had told Matalin, Evans, Reilly, and Warner of his exploits in voter suppression. He replied, "I promise you, I did not. . . . Absolutely not. . . . I drank some Scotch. . . . Absolutely not."

Four days later, Matalin emerged to give an account of his boastfulness to her about paying off the ministers: "It was quite braggadocious. He was quite full of himself." Carville related to me, "For two weeks, we knew what he said to Mary. Until he said it under oath, she kept quiet. Then she had to respond candidly." Rollins had been invited to their wedding, in New Orleans, on Thanksgiving Day, but he didn't attend. Matalin, meanwhile, was rumored to be his replacement on the "Today" show. Will Rollins face perjury charges now, with Matalin in the witness box?

Every day, George Bush calls around Washington seeking gleanings of gossip about Rollins. Others speculate mercilessly about Rollins' future as a political practitioner. "You know what I think?" [illegible] Republican consultant says. "He runs Quayle's comeback. But I don't think Quayle likes him." Another says, "Ed's whole life is 'Night of the Living Dead.' This time, I think he's dead dead." Still another Republican remarks, "Live by spin, die by spin. I think he'll come back as a pundit. He was really a pundit anyway." The legal proceedings seem to be only a prolonged phase of the cycle. ◆

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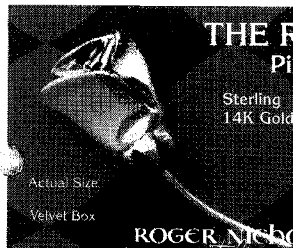

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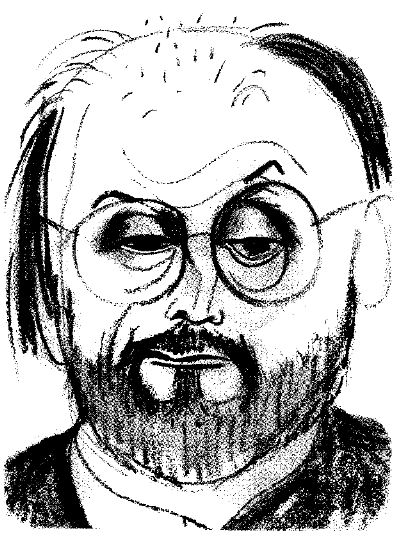
LIFE AND LETTERS

RUSHDIE IN THE LOUVRE

An appearance by Salman Rushdie in the newly renovated Richelieu wing reopens the question of a writer's right to exist.

BY CYNTHIA OZICK

SOME months ago—it was in Paris, in the Louvre—I saw Salman Rushdie plain. He was sitting in a high-backed chair at the foot of an incalculably long banquet table fitted out with two rows of skinny microphones, each poking upward like a knuckly finger. His hands lay on a dark-red leather portfolio stamped with his name in gilt. A gargantuan crystal chandelier, intricately designed, with multiple glinting pendants, hung from a ceiling painted all over with rosy royal nymphs—a ceiling so remote that the climate up there seemed veiled in haze. Who could measure that princely chamber, whether in metres or in history? And, all around, gold, gold, gold.



Rushdie: His plain humanity is a marvel.

AHMET GÖRGÜN

The day before, in a flood of other visitors, I had penetrated an even more resplendent hall of the Louvre, the Galerie d'Apollon: a long, spooky corridor encrusted with kingly treasures—ewers and reliquaries of jasper and crystal, porphyry vases, sceptres of coronations anciently repudiated, and, forlorn in their powerlessness, the crown jewels. All these hide in the gloom of their glass cases, repelling the gray granules of light that drizzle down from above. The filtered light throws a perpetual dusk over the march of regal portraits that once commanded awe and now, in the half-dark, give out a bitter look of faint inner rot. Here, among its glorious leavings, one can feel the death of absolutism. "I can stand a great deal of gold," Henry James once said; and so could the kings of France, and the Napoleons who succeeded them, all devoted to the caressings and lustings of gold—Midas-like objects of gold, soup bowls and spoons, fretwork and garnishings and pilasters of gold, gold as a kind of contagion or irresistible eruption.

James was enchanted; for him that rash of gold hinted at no disease, whether of self-assertion or exposure to the force of dread. He equated the artist's sovereign power with what he had "inhaled little by little" in the Gallery of Apollo: "an endless golden riot and relief, figured and flourished in perpetual revolution, breaking into great high-hung circles and symmetries of squandered picture, opening into deep outward embrasures"—a glory that signified for him "not only beauty and art and supreme design but history and fame and power." On his deathbed, confused by a stroke, he imagined himself to be Napoleon in the midst of a project of renovating the Louvre: "I call your attention," he dictated to his secretary, "to the precious enclosed transcripts of plans and designs for the decoration of certain apartments of the palaces here, of the Louvre and the Tuileries, which you will find addressed in detail to artists and workmen who are to take them in hand."

James's Napoleonic hallucination of 1916 has been realized almost eight decades later. Artists and workmen *have* taken the Louvre and the Tuileries in hand. There are cranes and sandy excavations—a broad tract of these at the end of the gardens of the Tuileries abutting the Louvre—and then, suddenly, there is the great, living, anti-Ozymandian I. M.

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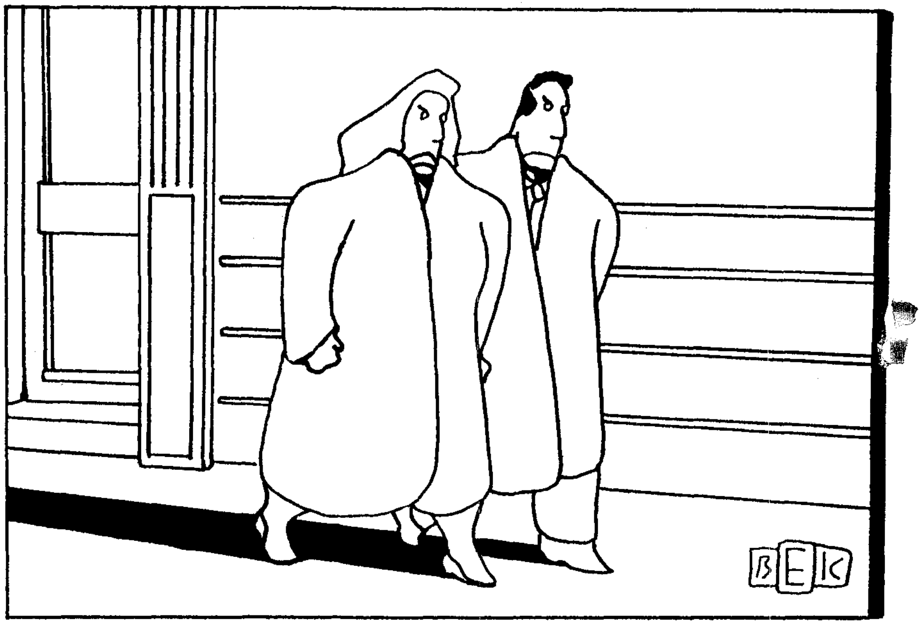


"I understand completely. I like good movies, and you like bad movies."

• •

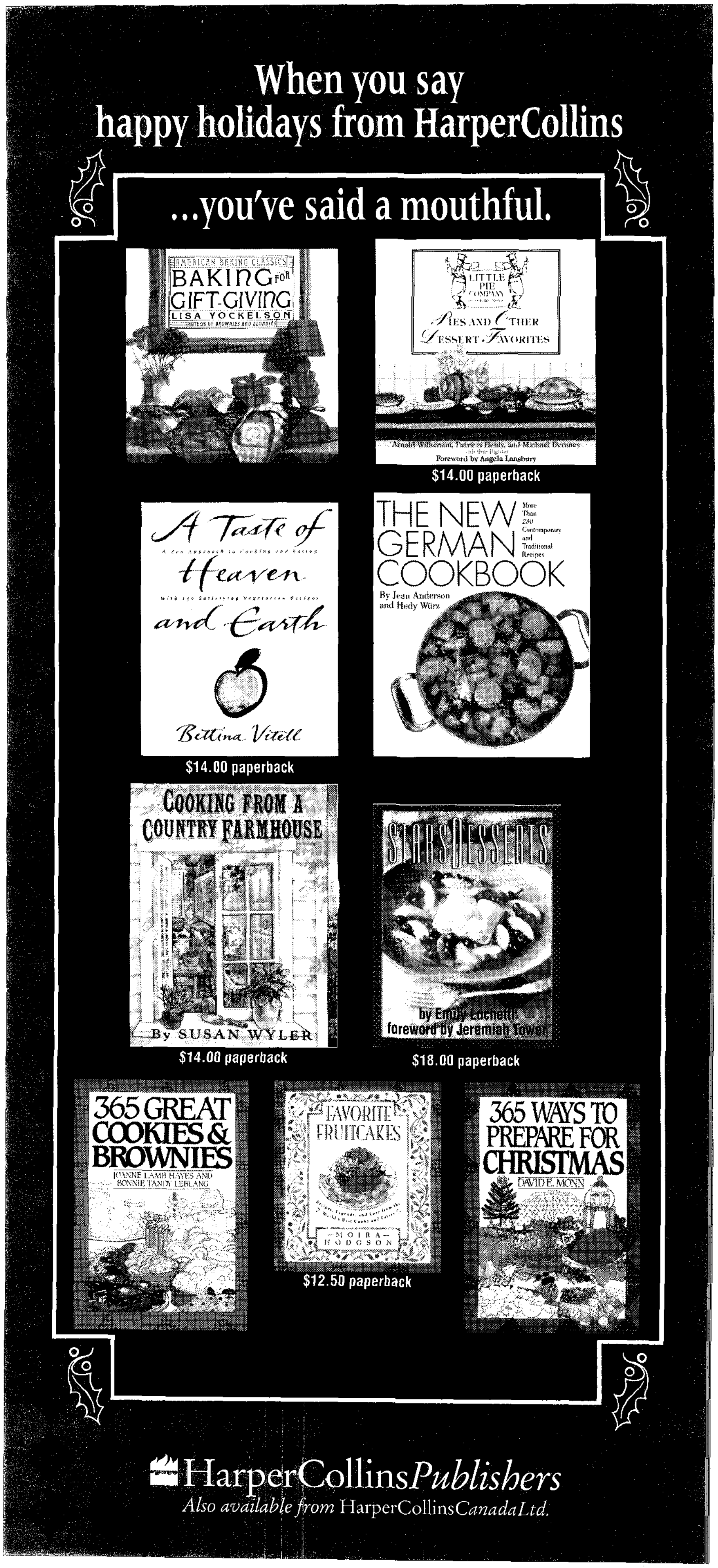
Pei Pyramid, swarming with visitors, a peaked postmodernist outcropping of glass and steel in the wide square courtyard of this brilliant old palace: a purposeful visual outrage conceived in amazing wit and admirable utility, flanked by a triplet of smaller pyramids like three echoing laughters. The apartments of the Louvre's Richelieu wing, where Rushdie sat—balding, bearded, in sober coat and tie—have been undergoing reconstruction: until recently, visitors' shoes would leave plaster-powder footprints on the red-carpeted grand stair. But visitors were, anyhow, few during the renovation, when the Richelieu was closed to the public. On the day Rushdie came, the entire Louvre was closed, and the Richelieu wing was effectively sealed off by a formidable phalanx of security men in black outfits, with black guns at their hips. Rushdie's arrival was muted, unnoticed: out of the blue, he was there, unobtrusive yet somehow enthroned—ennobled—by the ongoing crisis of terror that is his visible nimbus.

He was attending a seminar of the Académie Universelle des Cultures, the brainchild of President François Mitterrand. The Academy's president, appointed by Mitterrand, is Elie Wiesel, recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, and there are nine other Nobel-winning members, among them Wole Soyinka, of Nigeria (in Literature), and the Americans Joshua Lederberg (in Medicine and Physiology) and Toni Morrison (the 1993 laureate in Literature). The official meeting place of this newborn organization is in the Richelieu apartments. Unlike the twilight majesties of the Gallery of Apollo, the Academy's space is brightly warmed in sun from immense windows. Peering out, one sees a bit of courtyard but mainly the long line of an encircling balcony, ranged with mammoth stone figures in plumed Monte Cristo headgear and buckled eighteenth-century pumps, the very soles of which seem mountainously tall. It is as if hallucinations could inhabit even daylight. A low door—low in relation to the ceiling—opens into what might pass for a giantess's pantry: a series of closets white with plaster dust and smelling of an unfinished moistness, and then a sort of gangway leading to just installed toilets. On the day Rushdie came, it was up to an armed guard to decide whether or not to let one through to the plumbing.

The other end of this vast sanctum is a threshold to salon after palatial salon, magnificence serving as vestibule to still more magnificence, everything freshly gilded everywhere: the Napoleonic dream reimagined for the close of a century that has given new and sinister vitality to the meaning of absolutism. The gas chambers and the ovens; the Gulag; and, finally, the terror that invents car bombs, airplane hijackings, ideological stabbings of civilians at bus stops, the murder of ambassadors and Olympic athletes and babies in their cribs, the blowing up of an embassy in Buenos Aires, the World Trade Center in New York, the financial district of London, a restaurant in Paris, a synagogue in Istanbul. Under the shadow of this decades-long record, the setting of a price on a novelist's head is hardly a culmination, though it is surely, in an era of imaginative atrocity, a new wrinkle, a kind of hallucination in itself. Hallucination, after all, is make-believe taken literally: dream assessed as fact.

Long before he dreamed himself the imperial Napoleon ordering the rehabilitation of the Louvre, Henry James had a dream of limitless terror. The dream was of the Gallery of Apollo, but now those inhalations of absolutism were wholly altered: what had been seen as the potency of fame and the absolute rule of beauty and art turned away its sublime face to reveal absolutism's underside, a thing uncompromisingly deadly, brutal, irrational. Artist and dreamer, James in his nightmare is being pursued down the length of the Galerie d'Apollon by an "appalling" shape intent on murdering him. (Note the dreamer's pun: Apollo, appalling. Supremacy transformed into horror.) A door is shut against the powerful assassin; the assassin—"the awful agent, creature or presence, whatever he was"—presses back. And then, all at once, in a burst of opposing power, the dreamer defends himself: "Routed, dismayed, the tables turned upon him by my so surpassing him for straight aggression and dire intention, my visitant was already but a diminished spot in the long perspective, the tremendous, glorious hall . . . over the far-gleaming floor of which, cleared for the occasion of its great line of priceless *vitrines* down the middle, he sped for *his* life, while a great storm of thunder and lightning played through the deep embrasures of high windows on the right."

Not far from the Gallery of Apollo, the Richelieu apartments of the Louvre do not quake with the storm of nightmare, but the members of the Academy, discreet, courtly, inhale the appalling breath of the pursuer. The image of routing is dim: what weapon is there against a hidden assassin who may strike a moment from now, or tomorrow, or the day after? The arsenal of intellect—what we mean by the principles or intuitions of culture—is helpless before such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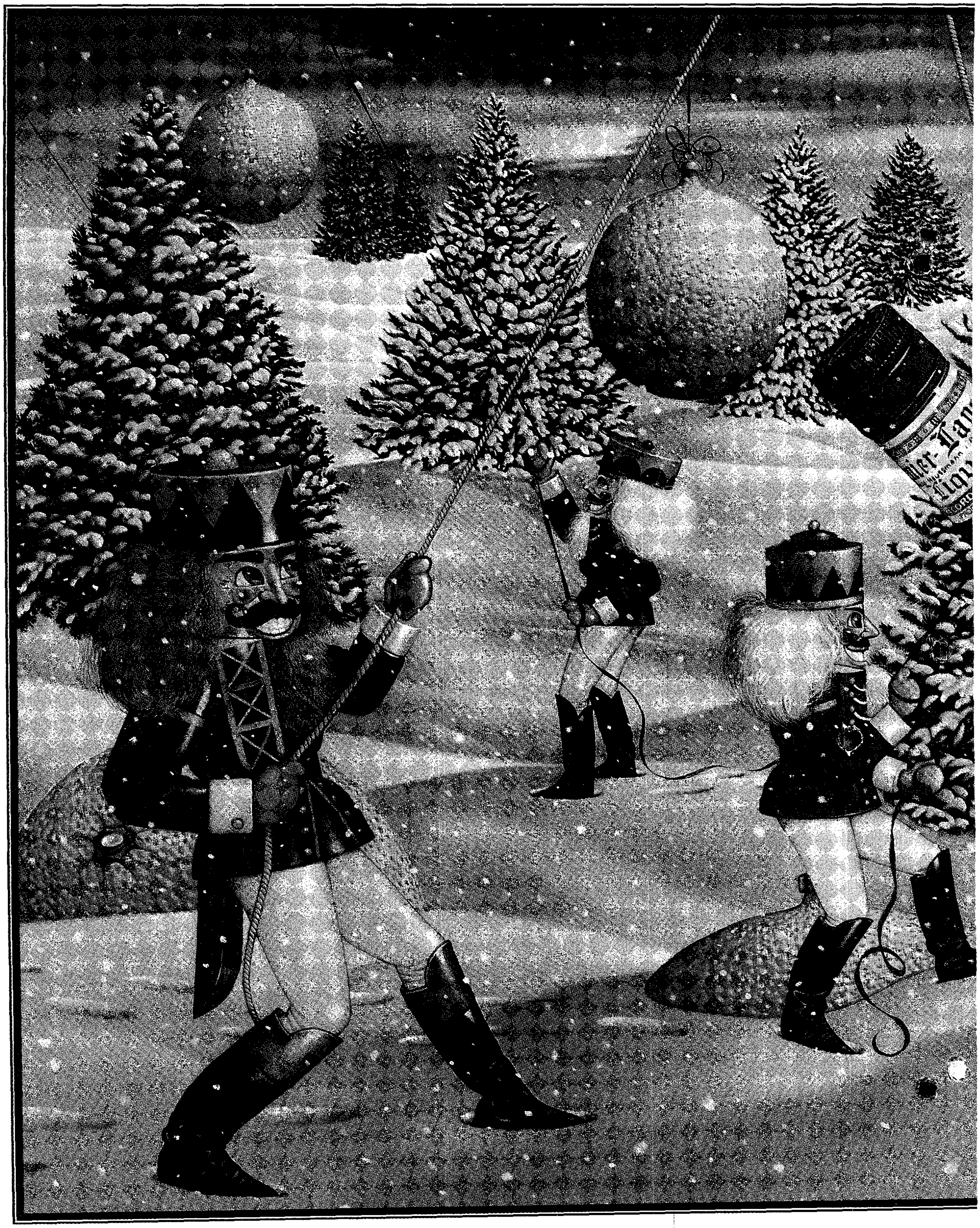

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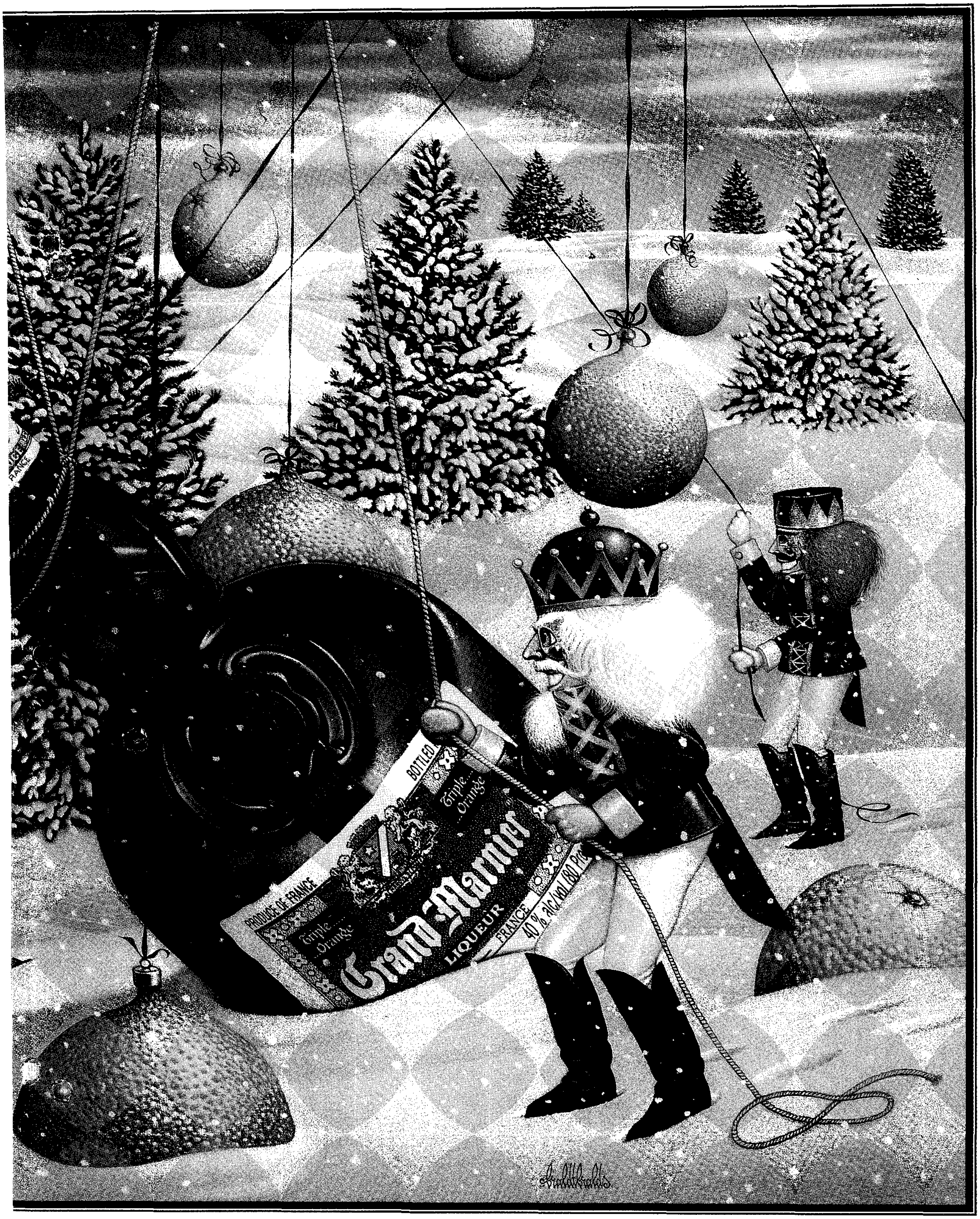
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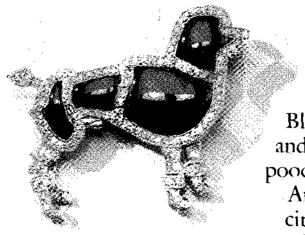

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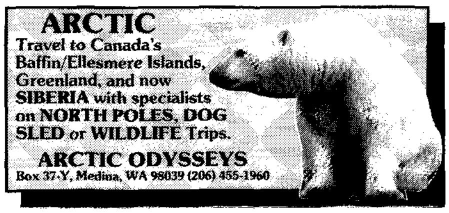

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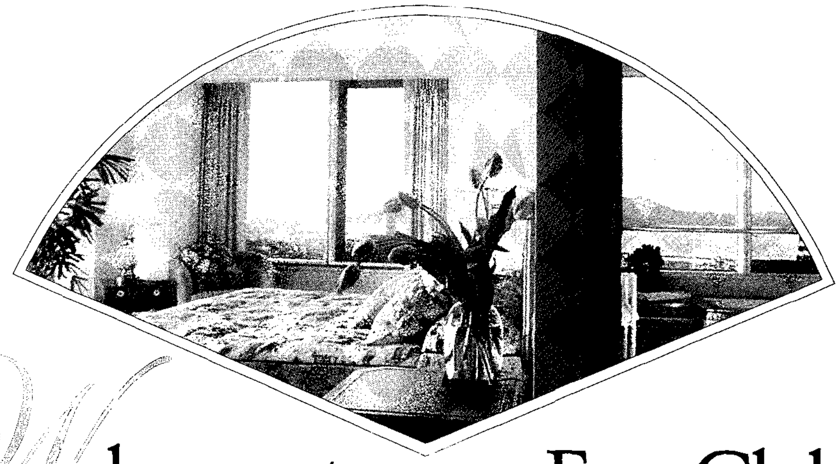
willed, wild atrocity: anybody here might overnight become Rushdie. The Academy's president, a survivor of Auschwitz, has already *been* Rushdie—a human being pitilessly hunted as prey. No one cranes down the endless table, with its line of microphones, to gape at this new human prey; yet Rushdie's quiet reality is electrifying, a prodigy in itself. It is his first appearance at a meeting since his unanimous election to the Academy. His arrival was hinted at, elusively, by President Wiesel the evening before, but would the man who is hunted and stalked actually show up? His plain humanity is a marvel—a fellow sitting in a chair, loosening his tie, taking off his jacket as the afternoon warms. He is no metaphor, no legend, no symbol. His fame, once merely novelist's fame, is now the fame of terror. A writer has been transmuted into a pharaoh, wrapped in hiddenness, mummified in life. It happens that Rushdie nowadays looks more scribbler than pharaoh: a certain scruffiness of falling-out hair and indecisive beard, the telltale fleshiness of the sedentary penman; the recognizable mien of someone who hates wearing a tie. How different from that slender princeling who at the Forty-eighth International PEN Congress, in New York in 1986, stood up to speechify in the aisle! What we saw then was a singularly beautiful young man got up in a bright Indian (or perhaps pseudo-Indian) tunic, black-haired, black-eyed, as ravishing in outline as some gilt Persian miniature. I no longer recollect what he said on that occasion, though I retain something of his point of view: rigidly "Third World," loyally "progressive." A document protesting Middle Eastern terrorism had been circulating through that body for some days; Rushdie did not append his name to it.

The bristling protection that surrounds him now is an offense, an enormity: professional, determined, watchful, admitting no breach; above all, conducted on a kingly scale. There is a twist of corruption—of civilization undone—in Rushdie's necessary retinue, a retinue that shocks: all these sentries, these waiting police cars in the courtyard, dedicated to the preservation of a single human life. Or one could easily, and more justly, claim the opposite: that it is civilization's high humane standard, a society's concrete and routine glory, that so much sheltering force should be dedicated to the protection of one man under threat. But the first response is the sharper one: the sensation of recoil from the stealthily meandering armed men in black—the armed men lurking on the way to the toilet, the squad of armed men churning in this or that passageway or bunched oddly against a wall. When, at the beginning of the year, President Mitterrand came for the official inauguration of the Académie Universelle des Cultures, the crush of television cameras, reporters, ambassadors, distinguished oglers, assorted intellectuals, and the charmed hoopla of fervent French *gloire* brought in the wake of the President's footsteps a troop of security men drumming over the Louvre's burnished floors, but there was nothing grim in that train. It signified honor and festivity. Monarchs and Presidents may have to live like targets in danger of being detonated; for their guests at a celebration, though, that busy retinue, however fearsomely occupied, registers as innocently as a march of bridesmaids. Rushdie, by contrast, is tailed by a reminder of death. Whoever is in a room with him, no matter how secured against intruders, remembers that the would-be assassin is on the alert for opportunity, whether for greed or for God.

Rushdie's so-called blasphemy is the fabrication of literalists whose piety can be respected but whose literalism assumes what may not be assumed: that the Creator of the Universe can be diminished by any human agency, that the sacred is susceptible of human soiling. How can a novel blaspheme? How can a work of art (which can also mean a work of dream, play, and irony) blaspheme? Islam, like Judaism, is not an iconic creed (both are famously the opposite), but the philosophers of even such iconic religious expressions as medieval Christianity and classical Hinduism do not locate the divine literally in paint or carving, and know that art, while it may for some kindle reverence, cannot be a medium for the soiling of the sacred. Art cannot blaspheme, because it is not in the power of humankind to demean or besmirch the divine. Can a man's book tarnish God? "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" the Lord rebukes Job. "Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? . . . Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?" After which, Job is chastened enough to "lay mine hand upon my mouth."

Men who were not there when the foundations of the earth were laid nevertheless lay their hands on a novelist's mouth. One of Rushdie's translators, the Japanese Hitoshi Igarashi, has been murdered; another, the Italian Ettore Capriolo, was seriously wounded. William Nygaard, Rushdie's Norwegian publisher, shot near Oslo, survived; apparently, an additional motive for the attack was Norway's part in facilitating the Arafat-Rabin peace initiative. The American publishers of the paperback "Satanic Verses" hide behind an anonymous "consortium." And meanwhile Rushdie walks or rides nowhere without his train of guards. After lunching in a dining room of the Pyramid, the other members of the Academy stroll the few yards across the Louvre's inner court to return to the Richelieu for the afternoon plenary; but Rushdie, emerging alone from the Pyramid like the pharaonic figure he has been made into, is invisibly placed, alone, in a limousine that moves with glacial languor from one part of the courtyard to the other, accompanied by security men slowly pacing beside it and all around it. Rushdie is the prisoner both of his protectors and of his accusers.

In the eyes of his accusers, his very existence is a blasphemy to be undone and a blemish to be annihilated. Barricaded day and night against fanatic absolutists who look for a chance to kill, who despise reason and discourse, repudiate compromise, and reject amelioration, he has become, in his own person, a little Israel—or, rather, Israel as it felt its circumstances until just recently, before the Arafat-Rabin peace accord. This is something that, in all logic, has cried out to be said aloud ever since the *fatwa* was first promulgated; but Rushdie's defenders, by and large, have not said it—some because they feared to exacerbate his situation (but how could it have been worsened?), some because they have themselves been among Israel's fiercest ideological opponents. But one fact is incontrovertible: for the mullahs of Iran, who oppose both recognition and peace, Rushdie and the Jews of Israel are to be granted the same doom. What can be deduced from this ugly confluence is, it seems to me, also incontrovertible: morally and practically, there is no way to distinguish between the terrorist whose "cause" is pronounced "just" (and whose assaults on civilians are euphemized as political or religious resistance) and the terrorist who seeks to carry out the mullahs' *fatwa* against Rushdie (a call to assassination euphemized as religious duty). One cannot in the past have reasonably exculpated Arafat's Al-Fatah for its long-standing program of bloodshed—not yet wholly suppressed—directed against both Jews and Arabs (the latter for what is termed "collaboration") while at the same time defending Rushdie and deploring his plight. And in one way, after all, Rushdie is better off than women knifed on street corners or bus passengers shot to death: he is at every moment under the surveillance of his security team. On the other hand, individual civilians on their errands, exposed to the brutal lottery of ambush, have their lucky and unlucky days; Rushdie, no longer a civilian, drafted into the unwill-



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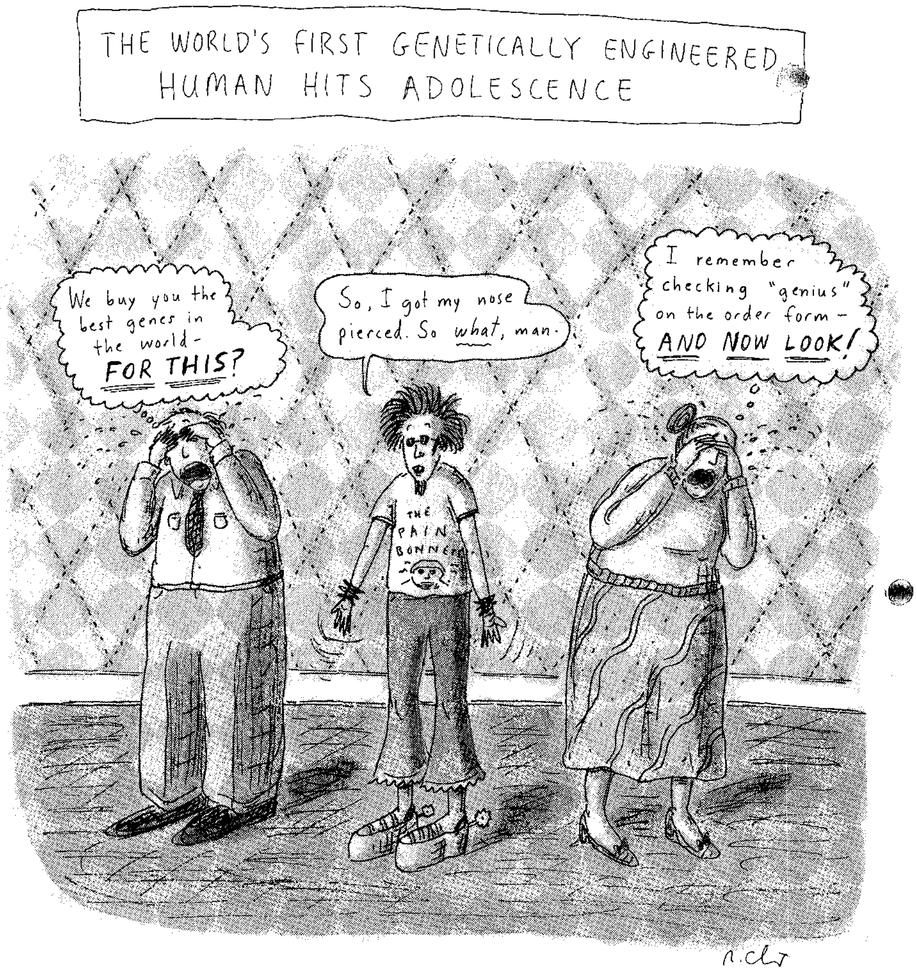
ing army of victimhood, has drawn the targeted ticket. All his days are unlucky.

STILL, like James in the Gallery of Apollo, today in the Louvre Rushdie means to turn the tables. Why link Henry James and Salman Rushdie? They are separated by a century. They were born continents apart. One is a vast and completed library; the other, his ultimate stature unfathomable, is in the middle of the way. Moreover (as for the issue of terror), what threatens Rushdie has a name, *fatwa*, and a habitation, Iran, and all those other places and men and women driven by the mullahs' imaginings of God's imperatives. Whereas what threatened James was no more than his own imagination, an extrusion of the psyche's secrets, nothing enacted in the world of real and ferocious event. What threatened James was a fable of his own making. But a dream, gossamer and ephemeral though it may be, is like a genius loci, which can send out exhalations with the force of ciphers or glyphs that can be decoded or read across centuries. (Is it the Louvre itself that will speak up for Rushdie? Wait and see.) There is, besides, an arresting nexus of situation and temperament. Like James, Rushdie left the country of his birth for England: each sought, and won, a literary London life. Each kept a backward-glancing eye on his native society. As James never abandoned interest, inquisitiveness, sympathy, and the sometimes adversarial passions of kinship with regard to America, so Rushdie retains a familial, historical, and scholarly connection to Islam, warmed by kinship, interest, sympathy. Both men were charged with apostasy: James because near the end of his life, partly out of gratitude to Britain, he gave up his American citizenship; Rushdie more savagely, on account of having written a fable. Both are in thrall to fable; both have an instinct for the intercultural tale of migration, what James called "the international theme." Both are beguiled by notions of assimilation and strangeness, of native and newcomer.

There is more. Rushdie, like James, is secular, history-minded, skeptical, impatient with zealotry. James's father, though harmless enough, was a man metaphysically besotted, a true believer, dogmatically sunk in Swedenborgian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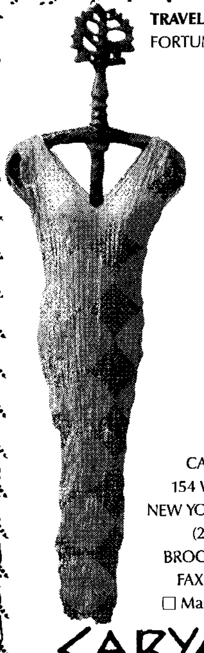
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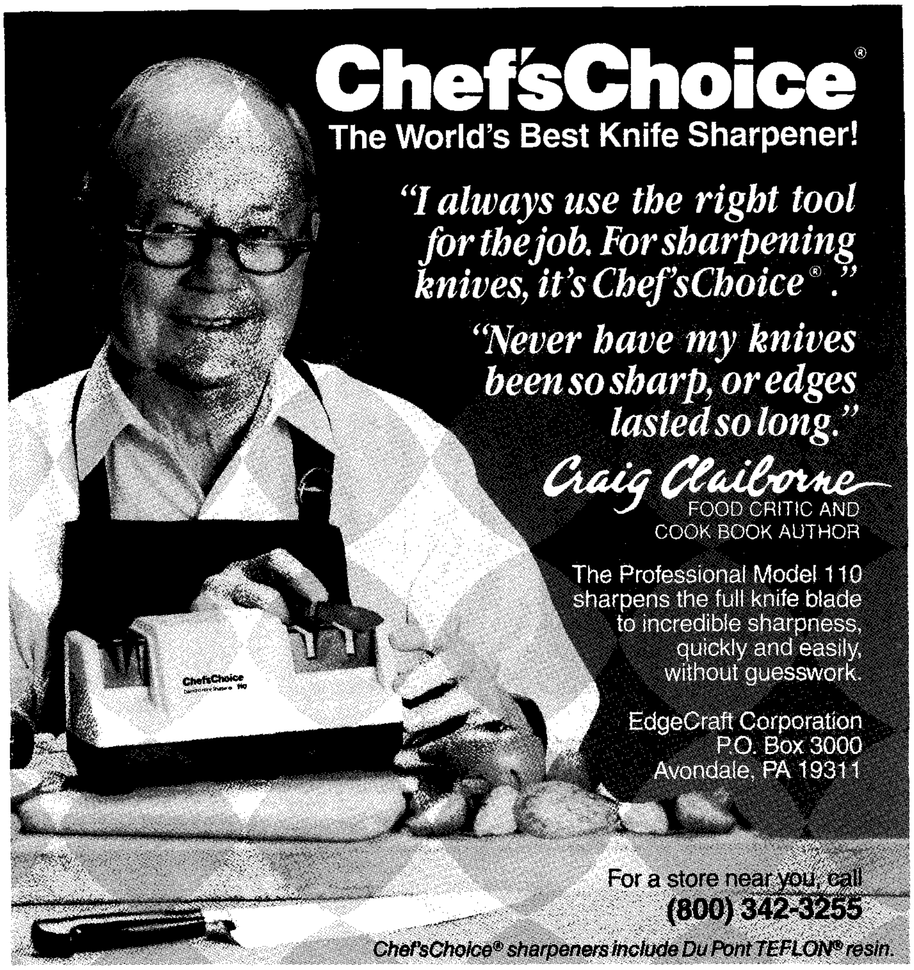
fogs. Having been reared in an atmosphere of private fanaticism, James repudiated its public expression wherever he encountered it. He had nothing but contempt for the accusers of Dreyfus. He followed the case day by day. "I sit . . . and read *l'Affaire Dreyfus*. What a bottomless and sinister *affaire* and in what a strange mill it is grinding. . . . I eat and drink, I sleep and dream Dreyfus." He did better than that. He wrote to Zola to congratulate him on the publication of "J'Accuse"—"one of the most courageous things ever done"—for which Zola was brought to trial and convicted. In James's view, if Zola had not fled from his sentencing, "he would have been *torn limb from limb* by the howling mob in the street."

Bottomless and sinister; apostasy and treason; the howling mob in the street. It is all familiar and instantly contemporary. The determination of the anti-Dreyfusards in France, and their fellow-travellers all over Europe, to destroy an innocent and consummately patriotic Frenchman by conspiracy and forgery, and especially by the incitement of mobs, reminds one that the concept of *fatwa* is not held exclusively by mullahs. And Rushdie, too, has been conspired against by a kind of forgery: having written a fable, he is represented as having issued a curse; he is charged with betraying Islam. Dreyfus was charged with betraying France. Millions were avid to believe it, until his champion Zola turned the tables on the persecutors.

It is now clearer than ever that Rushdie is resolved to become his own champion. Though ringed always by his ferocious security apparatus, he ventures more and more into the hot zone of political suasion. His meeting at the White House last month with President Clinton constitutes, for Rushdie, the hottest—the most influential—zone of all. The mullahs, whose denunciations followed immediately, hardly disagree, and the White House visit triggered instant State Department warnings to Americans overseas about possible retaliation. No one forgets the murder of that translator; as the anonymity of Rushdie's paperback publishers shows, it is never easy for others to speak up for him. And among writers' organizations Rushdie's cause was until only recently reduced to a half-yawning obligatory gesture: after a time, even a celebrated crisis grows humdrum and loses the glamour that writers notoriously enjoy. Wole Soyinka



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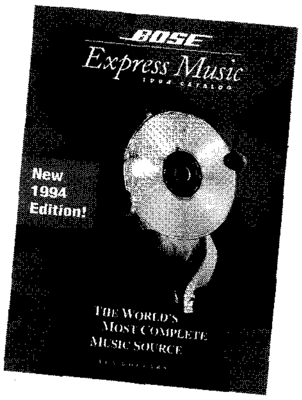

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points out that standing up for Rushdie is currently out of fashion and looked down on among certain multicultural academics: it is considered an intellectual offense against the mores and sensibilities of another culture—very much in the spirit of the recent World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, where the idea of the universalism of human rights initially was resisted by some countries either as prejudicial to national sovereignty or else as an objectionable parochial contrivance being foisted on societies that are satisfied with their own standards and values. The danger in defending Rushdie's right to exist is no longer the simple business of turning oneself into one more lightning rod to attract the assassins. Nowadays, standing up for Rushdie brings another sort of risk: it places one among the stereotypers and the "Orientalists," as they are sometimes called, who are accused of denigrating whole peoples. To stand up for Rushdie is to display a colonialist mentality. A man's right to exist is mired in the politics of anti-colonialism—and never mind the irony of this, given Rushdie's origins as a Muslim born in India.

Though Iran responded to Rushdie's White House appearance by labelling the President "the most hated man before all the Muslims of the world," and though the majority of other Muslim governments have shown official indifference to Rushdie's situation, not all Muslims have been silent, even in the face of personal endangerment. Remarkably, France this year saw the publication of "For Rushdie," a volume of poems and essays protesting the *fatwa*, by a hundred Muslim and Arab writers and intellectuals, including the Egyptian Nobel winner Naguib Mahfouz. And in Bangladesh the novelist Taslima Nasrin, herself lately condemned to death as a "blasphemer" in a *fatwa* issued by the fundamentalist Council of Soldiers of Islam, continues to speak out for the emancipation of women, for tolerance, and for secular freedom. "Without freedom," one of the contributors to "For Rushdie" wrote, "there is no creation, no life, no beauty."

In the Academy's afternoon plenary session, André Miquel, the president of the Assembly of Professors of the Collège de France and a distinguished specialist in Arabic literature, proposes a resolution condemning the systematic assassination of Algerian intellectuals by fundamentalist extremists. The language of the resolution is plain: "A terrible thing is happening in Algeria—people are being killed simply because they think." This action comes under the heading of Intervention, the Academy's chosen topic for its first year of life—a philosophic theme, but spurred on by the urgencies of Bosnia and Somalia. (Marc Kravetz, of the French newspaper *Libération*, and a consultant to this session, counts forty separate conflicts ongoing in the world. How many are cause for intervention, and by whom, and for whom?) Rushdie, who earlier quietly remarked that he hoped "to speak of something besides myself," keeps to his word. Without directly offering himself in illustration, he argues against "the specific thrust of the motion," and suggests that the particular case of Algeria is "typical, part of a larger phenomenon, not just an isolated thing"—that "there is a concentrated program to oppress intellectuals in many countries." Yashar Kemal, a Turkish writer, mentions the killings in southern Turkey by Hezbollah, the Party of God, and the murder of Turkish intellectuals "fighting for lay principles." The resolution is altered. "In many countries, and recently in Algeria," it now begins, "a terrible thing is happening." Someone raises a question of credibility: Is it appropriate for an Academy as newly formed as this one to be sending out resolutions? Don't we first have to settle down a little, and acquire a recognizable character? To which Rushdie replies, "We should issue motions even if the Academy is newborn. *We* are not newborn."

Luc Ferry, a professor of philosophy at the University of Caen, and another consultant to the plenary, describes Muslim societies, insofar as they fail to separate religion from matters like human rights, as "premodern." Rushdie, scribbling away as Ferry develops this idea, disputes the term. Moral fundamentalism, Rushdie argues, is not premodern but postmodern—in short, decidedly contemporary. Secular ideals, though they may be taken for granted in Europe, are seriously under threat elsewhere. In Saudi Arabia, for instance, modernity has been declared to be against religion, and its practitioners have been denounced as heretical. The concept of human rights is regarded by fundamentalists as an expression of modernity, and is rejected and despised. Moreover, not only are there conflicts between opposing cultures—between, say, fundamentalism and the secularizing West—but the same kind of conflict can occur *within* a culture, and on its own ground. Finally, if intervention means that you set out from home to supply assistance to another people, then what of terror, which leaves its place of origin to seek you out and destroy you in your own country? "Terror," Rushdie finishes, "is a reverse form of intervention."

He had, as he promised, not spoken of himself or of his condition. Though composed and eloquent, he had not spoken much at all. When he was neither speaking nor writing, he sat very still, as immobile as a Buddha statue. One got the impression (but impressions can violate) that he had learned to be still; that he had taught himself to be *that* still. He was, in fact, a magnet of stillness: it was as if that great splendid room were shrinking to a single point of awareness—Rushdie sitting there in his shirtsleeves.

Come back now to Henry James, and the glyphs he has left behind. In another part of the Louvre on this day, past turnings of corridors, is the darkened Gallery of Apollo, empty but for its portraits and carvings and accretions of gold—as deserted as it was in James's hot imagining, when the appalling pursuer scrabbled after him over those polished floors. The ghosts of the Louvre are many—kings, cardinals, emperors. Add to these the generations of museumgoers; remember also that Emerson walked here when America itself was almost new—Emerson, whose mind James once described as "a ripe unconsciousness of evil." In this fanciful place, it is today not possible to escape the fullest, ripest consciousness of evil; Rushdie's hunted presence draws it out. He is poet, fabulist, ironist; he is the one they want to kill because his intelligence is at play. But these ancient galleries, these tremendous, glorious halls, reverberate with a memory of the tables being turned, the pursuer diminished and in flight. Dream? Hallucination? Rushdie in Paris calls up that old nightmare of panic in the Louvre, and how the stalker was driven to retreat. And Paris itself calls up Dreyfus, who was no dream, and the heroic Zola, who routed evil with reason. Still, there is a difference. The terror of our time is stone-deaf to reason, and it is not enough for the Dreyfus of our time to suffer being Dreyfus. Against all the odds, he must take on being Zola, too. ♦

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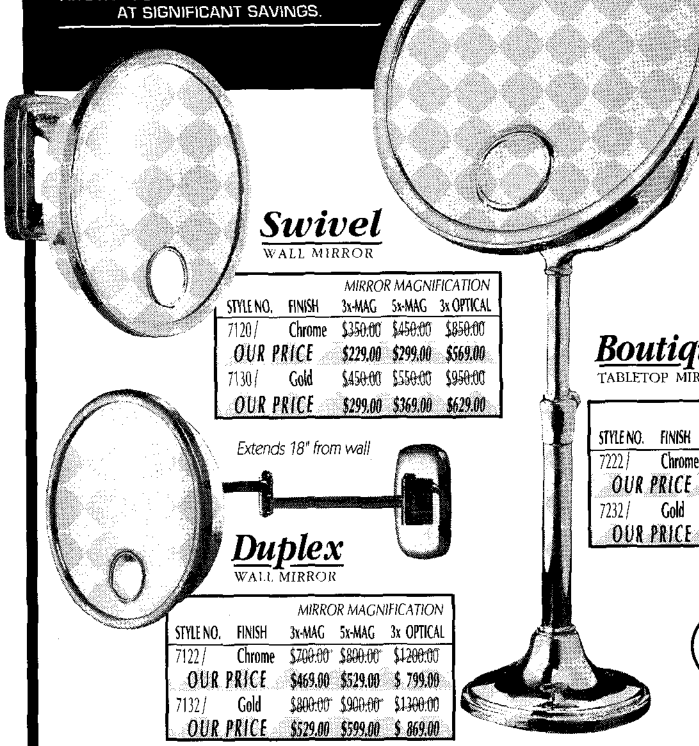

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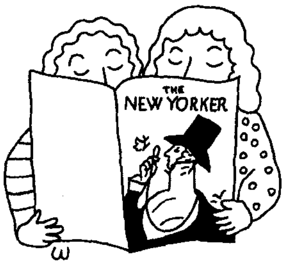

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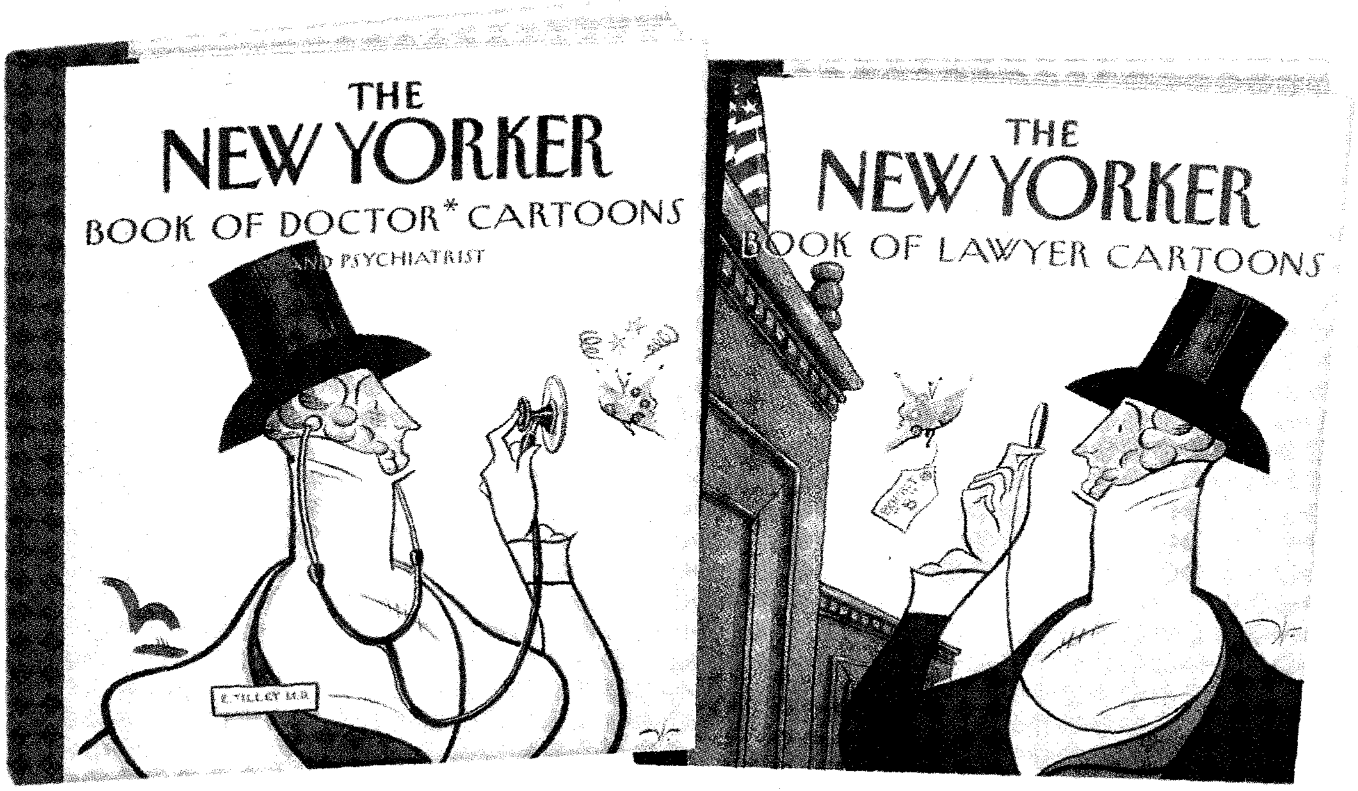

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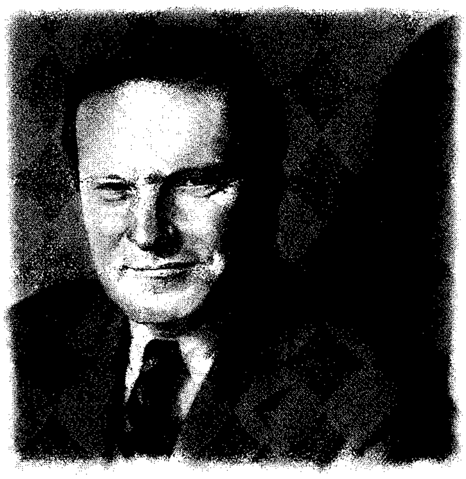
American programming has invaded overseas markets once dominated by state-run television, and ABC's Herb Granath has led the charge.

BY KEN AULETTA



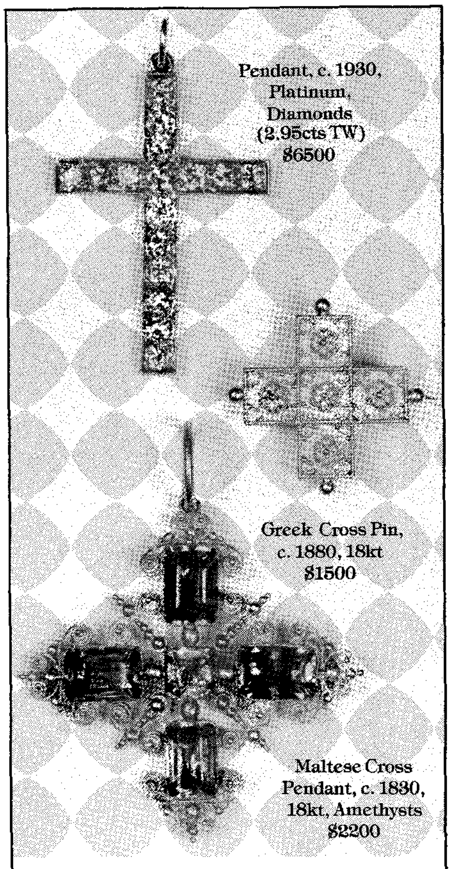
Last year, Granath's division produced five times as much profit as the entire ABC network.

SCOTT HUNT

HERBERT GRANATH'S personality is as steady as a dial tone. Although Granath is a formidable figure in worldwide television and theatrical production—as chairman of ESPN, as co-chairman of two other cable networks, as a pioneer in the selling of network shows to foreign outlets, as a partner in ten overseas television enterprises and production houses, as a facilitator in the recent linking of ABC News with the BBC, and as a producer of Broadway plays—"power" is not the word that jumps to mind when people first meet him. At five feet nine inches tall, he gets lost in a crowd. He dresses the part of a conservative businessman, in suits of gray or blue. His hair is thinning. He walks stiffly. He does not talk or laugh loudly. Unlike politicians, Granath does not work a room. Unlike many Hollywood studio executives, who are frequently derided overseas for being showy and boorish, he is often praised for his quiet civility.

Granath is the president of ABC's Cable and International Broadcast Group, and he is also the senior vice-president of the five-billion-dollar communications colossus that is its parent—Capital Cities/ABC, Inc., the world's third-largest (and quietest) communications company, after Time Warner and Bertelsmann. For five days last month—from October 11th until October 15th—eight thousand television producers and programmers visited Cannes to sell and buy programs at the annual MIPCOM conference. ABC's booth, in the basement of the Cannes convention hall—the Palais des Festivals, overlooking the Mediterranean—ranked as modest. Time Warner's booth, for example, cost about three hundred thousand dollars and shimmered at the head of the second-floor escalator like a crystal palace: inside were blue-and-white striped couches, a private conference room, offices shielded from pedestrians, and what at first looked like a separate restaurant with a terrace but was in fact a Time Warner commissary of a dozen or so tables with freshly squeezed juice, croissants, coffee, sodas, and hot meals. By contrast, Granath's booth had only a small refrigerator and a few cramped offices.

The garish glassed Palais, whose floor space is interrupted by a forest of white concrete columns, is "an abortion," says Barney Bernhard, who serves as the president of the United States division of the Reed Midem Organization, which runs these conferences. But then, Bernhard adds, adoringly, there is Cannes, where the sun shines and the Mediterranean soothes and where the hotels and the restaurants and the boats are so close that they create a cozy convention village. Something other than Cannes draws people to the twice-a-year conferences, however. The Palais has one hundred and fifteen thousand four hundred square feet of exhibition space, and the fact that every one of them is packed hints at the momentous changes in over-



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seas television. Thirty years ago, when the first MIP-TV conference convened, there were three hundred and twenty-seven participants; this October, eight thousand attended.

Privatization is the rage not just in Eastern Europe but throughout the world, as two forces come together: technology and politics. Technology has provided more ways to receive television signals. And nations that were once dominated by state-run television today welcome competition. What these new networks crave is programming, and, now that the growth of the television business in the United States has slowed, as the movie business did some years ago, American entertainment executives are turning to overseas markets. "Television used to be a relatively simple business in America," the Paramount Pictures Television Group's chairman, Kerry McCluggage, says. "You'd put a show on, and you knew that if you kept it on for five years you'd make a lot of money in syndication. Now there is no longer a guarantee that it can stay on five years, and there may be no market for it in syndication. So, the way television has changed is that you have to spend a lot of time thinking how to make shows viable, and the foreign market is a big part of it."

So far, the Americans have been the biggest winner in foreign markets, so much so that their dominance in the entertainment business has provoked some governments into erecting trade barriers to prevent what they call cultural imperialism. Entertainment is America's second-largest export (after jet engines), accounting for a positive trade surplus of four billion dollars a year, and television makes up nearly half of this total. Time Warner alone makes a quarter of these overseas sales—distributing one billion one hundred million dollars' worth of television programs and movies worldwide, according to Michael Jay Solomon, the brash and impeccably groomed president of Warner Brothers International Television Distribution. American entertainment companies dominate eighty per cent of the overseas movie box-office and just under half of all non-news programming on television. The bulk of this entertainment export is split by the six major Hollywood studios.

With few movies to offer, Granath and ABC don't sell as much at Cannes as do Warner Brothers or Disney or Paramount. But ranking right behind those three studios in the matter of television commerce is Capital Cities/ABC, which does about two hundred million dollars annually in overseas business. To understand what a nifty profit center Granath runs, consider this: last year, his division produced five times as much profit—three hundred million dollars overall—as the entire ABC network. Yet, except to the club of television executives who see him at the industry conferences and dinners and know him because he has been associated with television for more than thirty years, Granath is invisible. He built a small empire with a stealth strategy—flying below the radar, nurturing friendships, gathering information, making quiet alliances. "We're not in the announcement business," he says. "We're in the communication business."

Now, however, when broadcast and cable and telephone and studio and consumer-electronics companies are rushing into one another's arms, and everyone is looking for the security of wealthy partners, and those with wealth have to advertise it to be asked to play, Granath and Capital Cities/ABC have chosen to become more visible. The week before Granath left for Cannes, Capital Cities/ABC announced his promotion to senior vice-president. "We're coming out of the closet," Granath says.

GRANATH refuses to divulge his age, but he is just under sixty. He grew up in the Marine Park section of Brooklyn, attended public schools, and graduated from Fordham University, in the Bronx, in 1956. He studied theoretical physics there. "To this day, I know just enough technology to be dangerous," he says. "I still enjoy talking about technological developments." To help pay his way through college, he worked as an NBC page. After graduation, he was employed by NBC Television Network Sales, and attended Fordham's School of Communications Arts at night.

Smitten by the actress Ann Flood, who was playing Don Ameche's daughter in the 1957 Broadway play "Holiday for Lovers," he became a stage-door Johnny, hanging around the theatre after they met, and in 1958 they were married. They have four children—three boys and a girl. In 1960, a friend told Granath about an opening at ABC, which was then a shaky television network with a subpar news division and without a full daytime schedule. James Duffy, a longtime ABC executive, who later became the network president, interviewed Granath, who thought that he was up for a television network job. Instead, Duffy offered him work at ABC Radio. He would be selling radio time to advertisers, and his pay would be sweetened by commissions and a bonus. "I made a lot of money—seventy-five thousand dollars my first year," Granath says.

In the early sixties, Granath grew close to Howard Cosell, who was doing sports on ABC Radio. At the time, no one would have dreamed of putting Cosell, with his New York nasality and his vulpine looks, on network television. Cosell was opinionated, not slick and homogenized; in fact, the president of the radio network couldn't bear to listen to him. "One day, I heard that Howard had been fired," Granath recalls. "I had been working six months on a deal with Mennen to sponsor a morning drive-time Howard Cosell sports show. I walked in to the president and said we had just got the biggest deal ever." The president was ecstatic until Granath told him that the order called for Howard Cosell to do the show. "I just fired Cosell!" he exclaimed. Pride did not stand in the way, however: the president quickly visited Cosell and apologized.

For the next ten years, Cosell thrived on ABC Radio, and so did Granath. Jim Duffy, who in 1970 had been elevated to president of the television network, was encouraging Granath to start a division to sell TV sports. In 1970, Cosell was drafted as part of Roone Arledge's team, a team that would broadcast National Football League games on television on Monday nights—the first time any sport would shine in prime time on a TV network. Granath attended these games with Roone Arledge, who was president of ABC Sports and is now president of ABC News, and with what he calls a travelling freak show—Cosell, Dandy Don Meredith, and Frank Gifford as straight man. "Monday Night Football" was so popular that in a few years ABC had shed its also-ran image and emerged as an equal to CBS and NBC.

In 1976, Granath became assistant to Elton Rule, the president of ABC. On the thirty-sixth floor of ABC's headquarters, on Sixth Avenue, he worked closely with Rule and ABC's chairman, Leonard Goldenson. Still interested in technology, Granath followed developments in the infant cable industry and in products that tended to be known by their initials—the VCR, the DBS (direct-broadcast satellite), and the MMDS (multichannel, multipoint distribution system). "It became obvious to me that the wonderful oligopoly that the networks had enjoyed would be eroded," he recalled. "I did a white paper for Elton and Leonard. Leonard, God bless him, saw it right away."

Granath guessed that cable would be a great growth business. But government regulations, as Goldenson and Granath knew, didn't permit a network to own a cable-distribution system. The regulations did, however, permit ABC to get into the cable-software business by owning a cable channel, as opposed to the cable box that allowed viewers to select that channel. In 1979, Granath and a deputy—John Healy, who remains his deputy to this day—started a new division, which eventually came to be called

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ABC Video Enterprises, and they devised a five-year plan to position ABC in cable and other new businesses. His division acquired the cable sports channel that later blossomed into ESPN, and joined in the start of two new cable channels—Lifetime and Arts & Entertainment.

In early 1982, Granath became the president of ABC Video Enterprises, and since that time he has fought a successful, if sometimes uphill, battle to expand the network's reach into other businesses, including cable. Along the way, he met with resistance from network executives, who feared that he was strengthening the competition and possibly diluting the company's focus. "I had five very tough years, where old friends were not talking to me," he recalls. It wasn't until 1986—the year that a local TV station and publishing giant, Capital Cities Communications, merged with ABC—that Granath's division turned a profit.

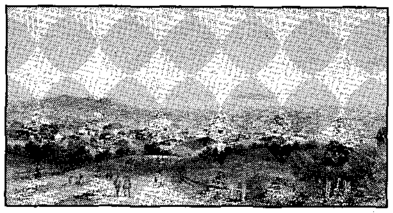
Today, Video Enterprises is itself an empire within the huge company. In addition to acquiring ESPN, which is now America's largest cable network, and starting Lifetime and Arts & Entertainment, he began pushing, much earlier than either NBC or CBS, the idea of selling network programs internationally, and his division now does more business overseas than any other network. He has also invested, with two French partners, in Eurosport, a pan-European, satellite-delivered sports service; in the Scandinavian Broadcasting System S.A., based in Luxembourg; in the Japan Sports Network, a cable service jointly owned with several Japanese companies; in RTL-2, a jointly owned German programming service; and in Lafayette, a company based in England, which owns mobile broadcast units and relays programs to broadcast satellites. Granath was a pioneer in co-production deals, investing in partnerships with production houses in Germany (Tele-München), Spain (Tesauro, S.A.), France (Hamster Productions), and England (Molinare). His division acquired majority ownership of DIC, a producer of animated and live-action programming for children. And, finally, in 1978 his division developed a partnership with the Shubert Organization, usually providing half of the capital for its investments; also, though the fact is little known, Granath, on behalf of Capital Cities/ABC, is today the fourth-largest producer of Broadway plays.

Of course, Granath has made mistakes. When he was offered a chance to invest in the Broadway revival of "Guys and Dolls," he passed up what is today a transcendent hit. And Capital Cities/ABC itself has at times been too cautious—declining, in 1990, for instance, to buy the twenty per cent of the now spectacularly profitable ESPN that it did not own. Nabisco Brands had acquired that twenty per cent in 1984, and, when Capital Cities/ABC turned it down, it was bought by the Hearst Corporation.

Last October 6th, Daniel Burke, the president and C.E.O. of Capital Cities/ABC, announced that he was separating the company into five divisions: the network; the broadcast-station group; the publishing division; multimedia; and a cable and international-broadcast group, which Granath would head. His promotion to senior vice-president was a reflection of more than satisfaction with his performance. It reflected, as well, a recognition that a new frontier of business opportunity has opened overseas. As happened in the United States in the eighties, the television marketplace is multiplying everywhere. Many governments' relaxation of restrictions on the private ownership of TV broadcasting companies has combined with the rise of cable and satellite technology to bring on a modern-day gold rush.

Five years ago, says Xavier Roy, who is the president of the Reed Midem Organization, England had four TV channels, and today it has nearly thirty, while France has gone from three channels to twenty-two. There are now a hundred and fifty networks in Europe, says Giuliano Berretta, the commercial director of the European Telecommunications Satellite Organization, and in five years there will be two hundred and fifty. State networks have been supplanted by private networks both in Eastern Europe and in the Middle East. Investors are scrambling to get a piece of the growing South American market. And Asia, with a third of the world's television sets—a billion four hundred million of them—provides a vast opportunity. Xavier Roy calls Asia the new El Dorado, and next November his organization is launching an annual MIP-Asia conference in Hong Kong.

Looking about at the crowds of potential buyers who thronged his booth at Cannes, Jan Mojto, the managing director of the KirchGroup, which is the most



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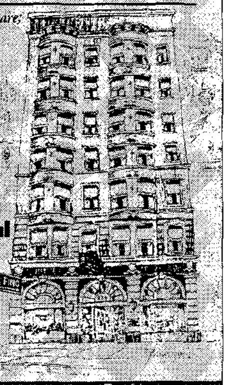

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prolific producer of television in Germany, said, "For the first time, we are operating in an environment that is a market. Before, it was a buyers' place. There was only public television. A limited number of channels." Today, a Kirch executive said, the company sells a hundred and fifty million dollars' worth of programs outside Germany. Barney Bernhard summed up the way privatization has altered the television conferences in Cannes by saying, "You used to come to France and there were two people to see. You went to England and there were three people to see. There were just two hundred people in the world to sell to five years ago. Around 1987 or '88, the world over here went berserk, like sharks in a bloody pool."

Instead of Warner Brothers selling a hundred million dollars' worth of television programs overseas, as Michael Solomon says it did five years ago, today it sells six hundred million dollars' worth. CBS has become much more aggressive overseas under James Warner, the president of the CBS Enterprises Division—with crucial assistance from the CBS Entertainment Division, which now produces and owns four of the twenty-two hours of prime-time CBS programs. Today, CBS sells nearly a hundred million dollars' worth of its entertainment and news programming overseas. In contrast to CBS, which just sells programs overseas, in early October NBC bought a controlling interest in a distribution system—the Super Channel—which reaches nearly sixty million viewers in Europe. MTV, which is owned by Viacom, is seen on every continent but Antarctica, and reaches one hundred and ninety million households outside the United States. Joseph Abrams—who, as the head of ABC Distribution, works for Granath—says that Capital Cities/ABC sells the annual Academy Awards show to more than ninety countries. ABC also recoups a third to a half of the cost of a made-for-TV movie by making about a million dollars on its overseas sale.

In contrast to some American studio executives, who are thought of in Cannes as effective salesmen but also as take-it-or-leave-it arrogant, Granath is a popular figure there. "He's the éminence grise," says Jessica Josephson, an international media and telecommunications consultant. "It's a relationship game, and he has spent the time overseas. He has travelled. He

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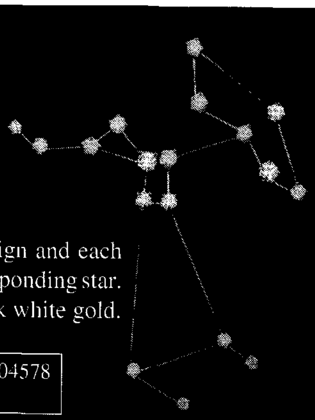

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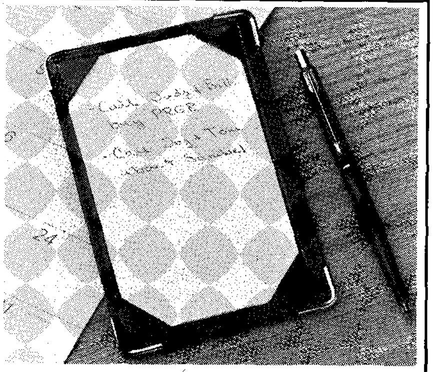

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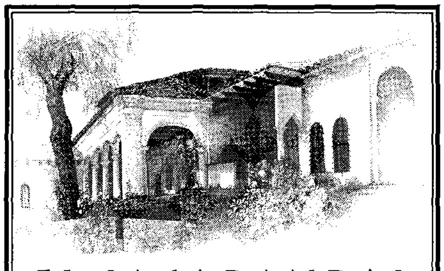

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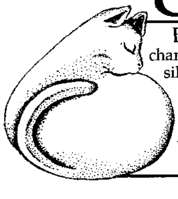

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has done what you have to do to establish good relationships and trust." Tesauro's president, Hervé Hachuel, who is Granath's partner in Spain, says of him, "He was probably the first American television executive to see the need to grow beyond the United States." And Granath's business grew chiefly because he acted as a respectful partner, says Herbert Kloiber, the chairman of Tele-München, in Germany, which has the world's second-largest communications company, the German-based Bertelsmann, as a partner. "We would never have chosen any other American company. I am very hard to get along with. But it has been a completely unclouded experience."

Kloiber said this over drinks at the bar in the Majestic Hotel, one of many hotels, along a strip facing the beach, where business is conducted in Cannes. By night, participants attend official functions, dine in splendid restaurants, and head back to the bars, where executives wander in and out, vying to buy one another drinks. By day, the executives mostly stay at their booths and promote their wares, or stray off to business lunches to work on relationships. The Americans, who are able to offer the most "product," as programs are commonly referred to, can enjoy the luxury of being laid-back sellers, so they stay closest to their booths. Representatives from the other countries, who are often buyers, spend their days meandering through the corridors.

At the stand of Nippon Television, the network's director of international operations, Haruo Kubo, sounded rather like an American automobile or shoe manufacturer complaining about Japan's restrictive market. "It's very hard to sell to the United States," he said. "There is custom. Habit. Language. We import much, but we seldom export to the United States." He added, "Foreign programs are not so popular on Japanese television—except for American movies." Nippon wanted to buy the rights to Steven Spielberg's "E.T." from Universal, but to get it Kubo had to take a package of nineteen other films, and pay a total of a million dollars, he says.

In the United States, block booking—forcing a buyer to take one product in order to get another—is forbidden by law, but overseas, it is not discouraged. A hit like "E.T." becomes the engine pulling the rest of the freight along. Joseph Abrams, of ABC Distribution, said that before he and Granath and Jack Healy arrive in Cannes every six months, he creates "a customized country list," a list of what they might sell to each country. They know that half-hour comedies generally don't translate well anywhere outside the United States, that cartoons and certain sports tend to be universal, that action-adventure shows transcend language barriers best. "Our goal is to maximize our inventory," Abrams says. When a programmer in one country tries to make an offer to buy just the two or three most popular ABC shows, Abrams resists, saying, "That's a nice offer, but your competitor will beat it."

GRANATH arrived in Cannes late on Sunday, October 10th, and left the following Friday. For all four days, he delegated the selling to his colleagues and concentrated on gathering information and cultivating relationships. On Monday morning, over breakfast at the Majestic, several of the people he had met over the years paused at his table to say hello. "One of the ways we operate is to talk to people," he said. "It's one of the reasons I come here. Being well known in the international community and being able to talk to these people is how I find out what's going on. If I were just to read the trade press, it would be too late."

Granath says that the information he gathers often comes from local partners. "Each of the German states has its own media authority," he said. "It's like having fifteen F.C.C.s. They ask, 'What are you going to do to enhance Bavaria?' That's why it helps to have local partners." The local partners also help shield Americans from a fever of protectionist anger that is rising everywhere: as channel choices proliferate and American-made programs flood these channels, the demand for local programming grows. In the long run, this expansion should open new markets, including this country's, for programs produced overseas. At present, however, local producers have difficulty competing with America, which has one of the world's largest markets, the biggest production budgets, and the most experienced storytellers. While American films like "Jurassic Park" earn more money overseas (nearly five hundred million dollars so far) than in the United States (over three hundred million dollars), few foreign films or TV shows do well here. Consequently, small foreign producers go out of business or get swallowed by large companies.

This situation makes for a combustible mixture. There are "two different issues," Jan Mojto, of Kirch, said. "One is the argument that American programming is taking over and controlling the world. I am not afraid of that. The second argument is that there becomes a kind of universal culture"—the imposing of an American way of life—and Mojto does worry about a loss of national culture. "It's very easy to complain," he said. "This is a very European attitude. The answer is simple: Compete."

Much of Europe appears to prefer another answer. The European Community had adopted a rule specifying that at least fifty-one per cent of all television programs must be European-produced. (In France, a majority must be made in the French language.) Currently, there is a debate within the E.C. over whether nations should provide subsidies to their entertainment industries, as many European and other nations do. Protective legislation makes sense, Tesauro's Hervé Hachuel said in Cannes. "The American television market is so much more advanced, and there is so much more financing in America, that you are able to sell product for prices that European producers cannot compete with," he explained. "And European producers can't sell in America. They say our product is not as good. I don't believe it. It is not a fair market. So we need help."

This cultural and political chasm extends beyond television and movies, and far beyond Europe. On the eve of the Cannes conference, the government of China announced that it had banned ownership of satellite dishes by individuals. At least several million of the dishes are already owned by individuals in China, and this was a bold attempt by the government to continue to monopolize the flow of information. The dishes were able to pick up Star-TV, a satellite service in which Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation recently acquired a majority interest, and which provides more tantalizing fare than that seen on the state-owned channel. Several other countries, including Singapore, have also banned the dishes, and these bans threaten Murdoch's five-hundred-and-twenty-five-million-dollar investment.

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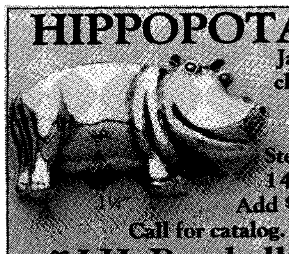

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enter a home—through direct-broadcast satellite distribution, or digital and compressed signals transmitted over copper or fibre-optic cable and telephone wires, or regular broadcast or wireless radio signals. But the tradition overseas, in contrast to that in the United States, is that governments are usually intrusive, unapologetic media policemen. And government, as the experience in China—and France—suggests, may alter the rules at any moment. "Murdoch did not do his homework," Granath said. "It's different doing business in Asia. Form is much more important there." Murdoch made a second mistake, he says, in not becoming a junior partner but instead making himself the majority owner of Star-TV. "China is the place of the future," he said. "You've got to be there. How you get in there is critical." Granath and Capital Cities/ABC have chosen to get there by entering into a deal to broadcast ESPN throughout Asia from a state-owned satellite.

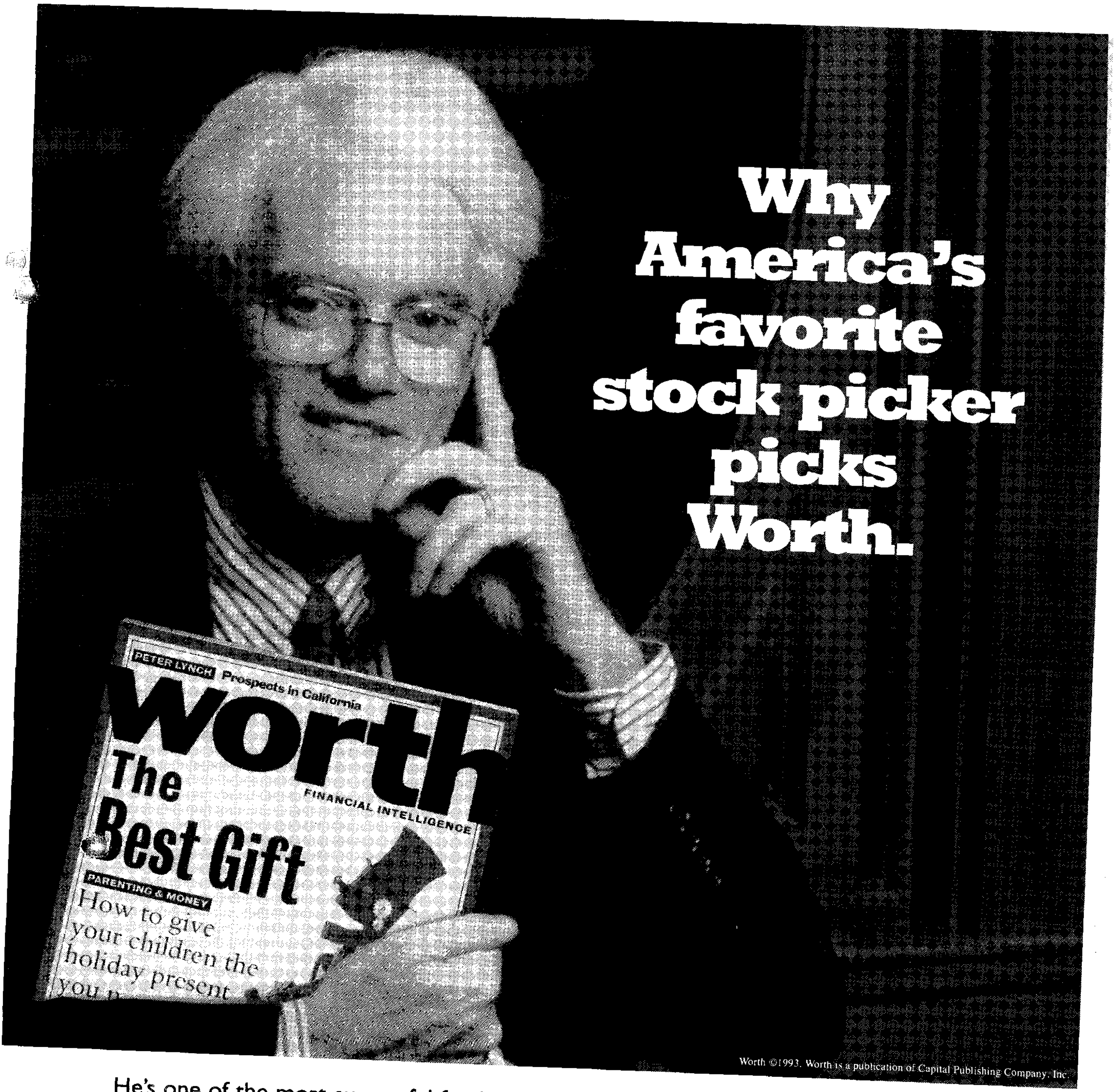
Michael Solomon, of Warner Brothers, didn't express an opinion on Murdoch's predicament, but he did offer one on the so-called cultural divide. "The cultural argument is bullshit," he said. "All that people in television care about is ratings and profit." He says the governments are just trying to protect failed local businesses. As for the notion that Americans are resented because of aggressive and insensitive business practices, Solomon rejects it. "You've got to analyze: Do they have a business interest in making that charge?" he said. "You can't say this is the general feeling abroad. The general feeling abroad is that people totally welcome the Americans."

Even if there were no cultural or political barriers, other obstacles to the new worldwide television frontier would almost certainly continue to arise. Some nations, like China, may continue to refuse to accept international copyright laws. And will anyone sell shows to a country that declines to make royalty payments? Asia may be the next great market, but not until all nations, like China, relax restrictions so that producers can withdraw currency, Paramount's Kerry McCluggage said. An impediment to introducing pay-cable channels is that they require sophisticated billing systems, and such systems have not been established in many countries. Also, without the equivalent of America's Nielsen ratings, how do TV channels sell time to advertisers if they can't quantify who is watching their channels?

These are real problems, but they are not the main barrier to a free international television marketplace. The largest barrier overseas is human, not technical. It's emotion. "These Americans are so bad," said Barney Bernhard, who is an American himself, and who exempts Granath and some other executives from his broad charge. "We took the French Minister of Culture around, and the Americans said, 'Look, I want to talk to you about quotas.' "

While others protest, Granath slips quietly from one meeting to the next and stops to chat at various booths with people he has known since worldwide television was in its infancy. He is ecumenical. Asked about quotas, Granath said, "They can be viewed negatively or positively. We view them as positive. What the Europeans are trying to do is foster European product. Seeing that as the European Community's goal, we started buying into European production companies." The second thing Granath and Capital Cities/ABC did was use their "expertise in commercial broadcasting," he said. "The Europeans have been at television as long as we have, but most of their experience is in state-supported television. They didn't have to worry about ratings. The only worry was that governments would get pissed off at you. Now that commercial television has invaded most European countries, American knowledge is exportable. We can help with on-air promotion, with rate cards and trafficking"—scheduling ads—"and program stunting and competitive scheduling. Therefore, the second phase of our approach is to get into various distribution media."

Granath has understood that success overseas is predicated not just on good product or technology, but on human relationships. There were three steps to his and Capital Cities/ABC's overseas strategy, he said. The first was to recognize that "Americans running anything poses a problem." The second: "We always keep a low profile"—certainly within a foreign country. And, finally, he added, with a sly, determined smile, "It's all very much like a club. If you are a member, you get to play. If you are not a member, you get what's left over. It's very much like Broadway. Members of the club get first look at stuff. Information is the ammunition for making a kill." ♦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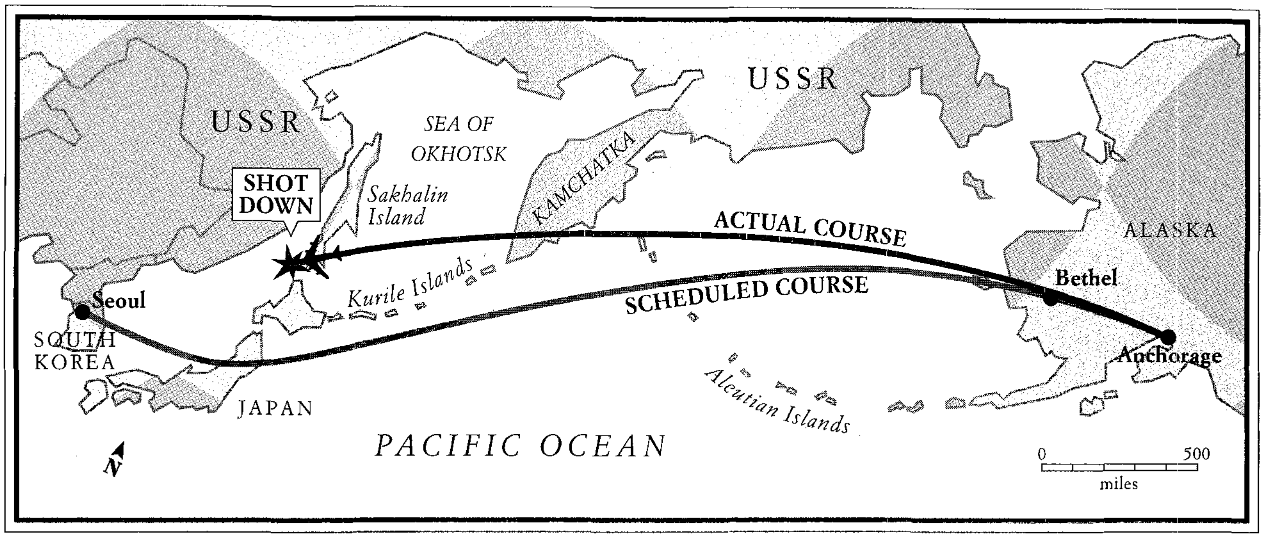
A REPORTER AT LARGE

CLOSING THE FILE ON FLIGHT 007

Why did the Soviets shoot down Korean Air Lines Flight KE007, killing two hundred and sixty-nine people? Charges of coverups have proliferated in the ten years since the incident, but now Boris Yeltsin has released 007's black boxes, giving investigators the answer to one of the last mysteries of the Cold War.

BY MURRAY SAYLE



Five and a half hours after refuelling at Anchorage, Flight KE007 was shot down as it passed through Soviet airspace near a military base on Sakhalin Island, three hundred and sixty miles off its scheduled course.

GREG WAKABAYASHI

LAST January 12th, technicians at the Bureau Enquêtes-Accidents, the investigation branch of the French directorate of civil aviation, in Paris, laced a salt-stained reel of recording tape into a sophisticated decoding device, pressed PLAY, and heard the first words of a ten-year-old cockpit conversation of history-making, breathtaking banality:

"Have you had a long flight recently?"

"From time to time."

"Sounds good. As far as I know, Chief Pilot Park has a long flight occasionally, but Chief Pilot Lee has [inaudible]."

"Ah [yawn]."

"Ah [yawn]."

First Officer Son Dong-hwin, the co-pilot of Korean Air Lines Flight KE007, joins in: "Having a dull time. Please write down a comment now."

Captain Chun Byung-in, the pilot-in-command of the airliner, a Boeing 747, replies, "Yes. [Inaudible.] Give it to me."

The battered reel turns, the long-dead voices gossip in a sleepy mixture of Korean and aviation English. Stretches of the tape record only silence. The cockpit door opens, a pert-voiced flight attendant asks, "Captain, sir, would you like to have a meal?"

Captain Chun is roused from some kind of reverie, or dream: "What? Meal? Is it already time to eat . . . ? Let's eat later."

Outside, six miles up, the sky is gray-black, the night is clear. Dawn is still an hour away. In the darkened cabin, a booming recorded voice informs the sleeping passengers, in Korean, English, and Japanese, that KE007 will arrive in Seoul, Korea, "in about three hours," and that "before landing we will be serving beverages and breakfast."

A few miles away, other voices are being recorded, in another language. No one aboard the airliner will ever get breakfast. Flight KE007 is three hundred and sixty miles off track, on the point of entering prohibited airspace above the Soviet Union, for the second time that night. Six miles astern of the airliner, Major Gennady Osipovich, a fighter pilot, has KE007 in the radar sights of his Sukhoi-15 fighter, call sign 805. His ground controller, code-named Deputat, relays an order from the Soviet sector commander, Lieutenant General Aleksandr Ivanovich Kornukov: "Eight-oh-five, Deputat. The target is military. Upon violation of the state border, destroy the target. Arm the weapons."

Fixed on the recording tapes, the grim game of purposeful cat and drowsy mouse goes on. In the airliner's dimly lit cockpit, the crew talk personal finance:

"In the airport currency exchange? What kind of money?"

"Dollar to Korean money."

"That is in the domestic building, too, domestic building, too. . . ."

Outside, the fighter pilot has just been asked by his controller what kind of aircraft the "military" target might be:

"Eight-oh-five, can you determine the type?"

"Unclear."

"Roger, twelve kilometres to the target."

"It is flying with flashing lights."

The tape unreels, the eerie antiphon goes on. The unsuspecting "enemy," showing navigation lights and flashing its anticollision beacon, like any airliner flying at night, climbs briefly to a more economical cruising height. Major Osipovich tells his controller he sees an evasive maneuver, and moves to the attack position, behind and below, invisible to the target's crew. Just as KE007 is leaving Soviet airspace—or is already over international waters; its exact position is unclear—the pursuing fighter gets a terse order and responds:

"Launch."

"Executed launch."

Aboard the airliner, the tape records the bang of a missile hit, then confusion and panic as the aircraft shudders and rears upward:

"What's happened?"

"What?"

The voice of the captain, suddenly alert, calls orders as the crew wrestles with controls gone crazy. One minute and forty-four seconds after KE007 is hit, the plane's electric power fails, and the recording stops.

The Soviet pilot reports to his controller, and the controller asks, "Eight-oh-five, did you launch one missile?"

"Launched both."

"Roger, well done."

Twelve minutes after the attack, KE007 crashed into the sea, killing all two hundred and sixty-nine people aboard. The tape has much more to tell us, but the French experts had heard the essentials. The airliner was innocently off course, the crew half asleep. The Soviets had persuaded themselves, against all the evidence, that the airliner could be a military target. The passengers and the crew never knew they were lost, or what hit them. The greatest mystery of the Cold War era is a sad, cautionary story, but it is no longer a mystery. Why has it taken ten years to get the truth of this tragedy? Can we be sure we are getting it now?

THERE can be no doubt about the authenticity of the airliner's tapes. They come from the flight-data recorder and the cockpit voice recorder—the "black boxes," which are actually painted bright orange—of the doomed airliner; the boxes were recovered, battered and salt-encrusted but intact, from the sea, and identified as those carried on KE007 and made respectively by Sundstrand Data Control and Collins Avionics. After many adventures, including a long spell in the secret archives of the G.R.U. (Soviet military intelligence) in Moscow, the tapes were handed over last January, on the order of President Boris Yeltsin, to the International Civil Aviation Organization, or I.C.A.O., the aviation arm of the United Nations, at its Paris office. With them was another set of tapes, even more informative: ground-to-ground and ground-to-air recordings of the Soviet military-communications network in action against KE007. Here, at last, we had solid, indisputable evidence.

Ten years ago, the council of the I.C.A.O. had designated France, as the member with the right combination of technical skills and (unlike the United States, Japan, and the Soviet Union) no known or suspected connection to the tragedy, to examine any evidence that might turn up. At that time, when the Cold War had intensified, the possibility of new evidence seemed remote. KE007's wreckage had disappeared, along with the remains and the effects of all aboard, leaving a few bitterly disputed flight releases, radar tracks, and one-sided radio intercepts to hint at what must have happened.

Now, by a political miracle, the most eloquent and impartial witnesses of all, the black boxes themselves, have come to light, enabling the I.C.A.O. investigative team to complete its inquiry, which was suspended in 1983 for lack of hard evidence. In cautious and sometimes difficult technical language, the investigators' report was released at I.C.A.O. headquarters, in Montreal, in June. The I.C.A.O. investigators have no doubts about the new material. As their completed report says, everything matches: time signals and voices recorded aboard the aircraft fit the messages recorded on the ground—in fighter bases along the Soviets' far-eastern border and in air-traffic-control centers in Anchorage and Tokyo. The distance that the aircraft spiralled into the sea accounts for damage to the black boxes, but their serial numbers are legible and match those held by the makers. To the I.C.A.O.'s satisfaction, the mystery is now solved. The agency's KE007 file is at last closed.

When the I.C.A.O. secretary-general, Philippe Rochat, was asked in Montreal who was to blame for the downing of the aircraft, he replied, "Our task was simply to collect and verify the facts. It is for you"—journalists who have followed the KE007 story for years, this writer included—"to study our report and come to your own conclusions." About the tapes, one conclusion is clear: quite apart from their known history, their dialogue is too psychologically true to be the work of actors or propagandists. And the voices can only be the real thing. The other tapes are too damaging to Russian military pride and too convincing in their incoherence to be anything but genuine. Together, they answer the two questions at the heart of the KE007 tragedy that for years have tormented the victims' kin, and puzzled the rest of us: How did KE007 get to its fatal rendezvous with Fighter 805? And why did the Soviets shoot down an airliner that was harmlessly off course?

CLUSTERED around American Airlines terminal Gate 15 at Kennedy Airport, in New York, on the rainy night of August 30, 1983, KE007's passengers were no more and no less diverse than those taking any flight over the North Pacific to the Far East, the second-busiest air route in the world, outranked only by its North Atlantic counterpart. Representative Larry P. McDonald, Democrat of Georgia, was the lone V.I.P.: he was the national chairman of the John Birch Society, the owner of two hundred guns, an opponent of a memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King, and, according to the *Times,* "uncontestably the most conservative member of Congress." Near him, flying economy, were Margaret Zarif, who was the author of two books on Dr. King and a trustee of Detroit's Museum of African-American History, and her friend Jessie Slaton, a retired Common Pleas Court judge from Detroit. Rebecca Scruton, twenty-eight years old, recently widowed and seeking comfort by visiting her parents in Seoul, left her passport at home, missed an earlier flight, and hurried to J.F.K. by limousine, barely in time to catch KE007.

Mary Jane Hendrie, two weeks short of her twenty-sixth birthday, was flying to Tokyo via New York and Seoul to start her first job, with a stockbrokerage firm. Miss Hendrie's Canadian immigration card—she was born in Scotland—washed up on a beach in northern Japan, and was the first positive evidence of the fate of KE007. Her parents believe she died clutching it in her hand, hoping to spare them the anguish of not knowing what had become of her. A forty-one-year-old Korean-American martial-arts instructor named Bill Hong won his plane ticket in a golf tournament. Neil Grenfell, who was thirty-six, was an Australian senior executive of Eastman Kodak in Seoul; he had boarded the flight with his wife, Carol Ann, and their two small daughters after a vacation in New York state. Susan Lee Campbell, a twenty-eight-year-old veterinarian, was flying via Seoul for further study in Taiwan, because that route was "quicker and cheaper" than flying direct.

John Oldham, twenty-seven, a new graduate of the Columbia Law School, was going to Beijing via Seoul to study Chinese law. He had cancelled an earlier reservation so that he could help visiting Chinese scholars find accommodations near his university. A Columbia researcher named Jong Jin Lim was flying with his brother to their mother's funeral in Korea. François de Massy, twenty-nine, of Quebec, was flying to Manchuria via Seoul to study agriculture, seeking techniques to ease hunger in the Third World. Kevin McNiff, twenty-eight, of Beverly, Massachusetts, was on his way to a teaching job at a university in Taichung, Taiwan.

Altogether, a hundred and five Koreans (twenty-nine in the crew, including two armed sky marshals, who were carried in case there might be a North Korean hijacking attempt), sixty-two Americans, twenty-eight Japanese, and seventy-four people of other nationalities boarded KE007 in New York. Twenty-three were children under twelve.

In Anchorage, the scheduled refuelling stop, KE007 changed crews while the passengers streamed into the cavernous, brightly lit airport to stretch their legs, shop, and make calls home. Much has been surmised about Chun Byung-in, the incoming pilot-in-command. At forty-five, Captain Chun had already put in ten years flying fighters with the South Korean Air Force and ten more on 747s with K.A.L. His last flight would have been his eighty-fourth North Pacific crossing. Chun has been variously described (on no more evidence than his military record) as a right-wing fanatic ready to die for the cause and (on the slightly more solid ground that he was once chosen as backup to fly President Chun Do-hwan of South Korea) as a superb pilot, incapable of making a mistake. What is beyond dispute is that Captain Chun, on his last night alive, was a weary man.

In the previous five days, Chun and his crew had worked flights from Seoul to Anchorage, Anchorage to New York, New York to Toronto, and Toronto to Anchorage. In the month of August, 1983, Chun had flown eighty hours; the maximum allowed by the K.A.L. operations manual for the month was ninety. KE007's crew had been on the ground in Anchorage for eleven hours and forty-three minutes before returning to work, at 2:30 A.M., local time. Sailors have long feared homeward-bound carelessness on the last leg of a long voyage. Pilots are no more immune to disruption of their circadian rhythms—jet lag—than anyone else. Long overwater flights are, as the I.C.A.O. report points out, the ones most conducive to inattention. A calm night and a warm cabin (to help passengers sleep) go far to explain the recorded non sequiturs and inane banter of three tired men desperately trying to stay awake. By ill luck, that same night Captain Chun was handed a tricky navigational problem—one that called for an alert mind to solve.

The recovered flight-data recorder tells exactly how KE007 was flown to disaster, but not why. The airliner took off from Anchorage as scheduled, at 4 A.M., local time, headed north, and then turned left, on radioed instructions from the airport control tower, to pick up the air route between Anchorage and the fishing hamlet of Bethel, three hundred and eighty miles due west—the "ocean gate," where planes begin the crossing of the North Pacific. Once on the designated airway, Captain Chun should have engaged his inertial-navigation system, or I.N.S.: it would have steered KE007 safely to Seoul with only routine attention from the crew.

The inertial-navigation system, a useful spinoff of the space age, has revolutionized air navigation. Like all modern airliners, KE007 carried no fewer than three separate I.N.S. units, all in working order. No triple I.N.S. failure has ever been recorded. The most accurate self-contained navigating method yet devised, the I.N.S. has come close to eliminating navigational errors from aviation—and, air-traffic controllers say, has added to the boredom of long flights by mandating constant, mind-deadening checks of a machine that never makes a mistake.

But KE007 was not steered by its I.N.S. at any point on its last flight. Three minutes after takeoff, the black-box recording tells us, Chun coupled his autopilot to his aircraft's magnetic compass, which flew the aircraft for the next five hours and twenty-three minutes, to the spot where it was shot down—deviating farther and farther from its assigned track, and twice crossing prohibited Soviet airspace, on the way. Yet the I.N.S. units aboard KE007 must have been up and running: the crew regularly reported wind and other flight data, and that information could have come only from a working I.N.S.—working, that is, in data-display mode, but not steering the aircraft. Why did Captain Chun select a magnetic heading in the first place? Why did he let his autopilot go on flying KE007 by magnetic compass, suicidally unreliable for night flying close to an unfriendly coast? By pure accident, the I.C.A.O. says.

Now superseded by the I.N.S. for long flights, aircraft magnetic compasses still do have important uses. By a tradition as old as aviation itself, every one of the world's airports is aligned on a magnetic heading, so that all flights still begin and end on a compass course. The I.N.S., accurate to within a mile of error for every hour of flight, cannot be relied on to find airport runways at night, in fog, or in thick weather. Between compass-oriented takeoff and I.N.S. flight there is a vital link, a radio beam broadcast from the ground. Approaching or leaving airports, pilots turn to Very High Frequency Omnidirectional Radio Range, or V.O.R., a ground-based development of the system that was used to help bombers find their targets during the Second World War. The V.O.R. broadcasts pencil-thin radio beams, which radiate from the transmitter like the spokes of a wheel, and so are called radials. There is one radial beam for each degree of the compass. The V.O.R. radials, too, are laid out on magnetic headings, and conform to runway alignments.

V.O.R. thus bridges the gap between a takeoff or a landing, done on a compass heading, and the main part of the flight, when the I.N.S. steers the aircraft along the route programmed into its in-

ternal computers. So important is the precision of the ground-based V.O.R. in insuring that the first heading of the flight is correct that the company rules of Korean Air Lines direct pilots not to engage the I.N.S. until they have confirmed, by a reference from the ground (at night, it could be only by the V.O.R. beam), that they are on the right track. That night, though, there was no V.O.R. at Anchorage; it was shut down for maintenance. Captain Chun, like other pilots, was duly informed, and indicated his acknowledgment.

The missing V.O.R. beam presented a problem that is unusual, but not unheard-of, in aviation: How were the pilots to check that they were on the correct heading leaving Anchorage (246 degrees magnetic, almost due west) before they engaged the I.N.S., as their rule books told them to do? The other pilots solved the problem by silently ignoring the rule book. They still had to find the correct departure heading, of course. Among the data that can be displayed by the I.N.S. even when it is not steering the plane is the distance from the plane to the programmed route—"cross-track error," in pilot's jargon. By watching the cross-track error steadily decrease as their aircraft approached the correct route, the other pilots that night were able to engage their I.N.S. at an appropriate moment. With a careful position check at Bethel, where the V.O.R. *was* working, their solution was safe and caused no problems.

Captain Chun decided to go strictly by his rule book. He must have used his I.N.S. display to guide him to the correct track, because radar data later released by the Federal Aviation Administration show KE007 approaching within a mile of it. At that point, however, the flight-data recorder testifies that he switched his autopilot not to the I.N.S. but to a compass heading of 246 degrees, marked on his chart as the first heading out of Anchorage. The number was well known to Chun: 246 was the V.O.R. beam he had tuned in at Anchorage eighty-three times before. (The flight-data recorder actually monitored not the heading selected but the one flown, which is affected by small changes in aircraft trim. The I.C.A.O. experts report the average track flown as 245.4 degrees, consistent with a selection of either 246 or 245 degrees, the latter being the heading shown for the second part of the Anchorage-Bethel leg on Captain Chun's chart. The two headings would have produced similar results.)

Why did Captain Chun leave his autopilot coupled to a compass heading—which, by pure coincidence, pointed more or less toward Seoul, but via the Soviet Union's prohibited airspace—for the next five and a half hours? He may have simply forgotten about it. Reports made to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of more than a hundred airline navigation errors involving the I.N.S., between September of 1978 and May of 1983 and between January of 1986 and November of 1992, showed that almost twelve per cent of the errors were due to this cause; one plane drifted two hundred and fifty nautical miles off track before the mistake was caught. The autopilot-selector switch is not particularly prominent on the control panel between the pilots, and the I.N.S. setting is only one notch away from the one that couples the compass; moreover, once the setting is selected, the crew members have no need to look at it again. In 1985, Captain Morihiko Nishioka, of Japan Air Lines, failed to notice that he had left his autopilot on a compass heading while his Boeing 747 wandered sixty miles off, in broad daylight, toward prohibited Soviet airspace. He lived to confess on TV, "I just didn't see it. I can give no other explanation." Perhaps Captain Chun could have said the same.

The new I.C.A.O. report proposes another possibility—a third link in that night's chain of disasters. While it cannot now be proved (the autopilot switch itself either disintegrated when KE007 crashed into the sea or was later destroyed by agents of Soviet military intelligence), it makes psychological sense, and adds a further bitter irony to the tragedy. Careful Captain Chun no doubt intended to follow his company's rule book to the letter, and check his course by the first available ground-based radio aid—the V.O.R. at Bethel, whose beam he would have first picked up some two hundred miles away.

Like all radio signals, however, the V.O.R. beam spreads as it travels, and at extreme range it is unreliable. Captain Chun would have been likely to wait until he was a hundred and seventy-five miles or so from Bethel, at which point KE007, unknown to its crew, was between seven and eight miles north of its programmed track. At that range, the V.O.R. has a possible error of five degrees on either side of the index mark. The directional needle may have pointed directly at Bethel. It may have been a little to one side or the other—a discrepancy Chun would have often seen before. Either way, believing that he had radio confirmation from the ground that he was on track to Bethel, Chun could have leaned forward and turned his autopilot switch to I.N.S.

With, however, an unintended result. In the dry words of the I.C.A.O. report, if the flight crew "made such a selection when the aircraft was outside the 7.5-nautical-mile envelope for the capture of a desired I.N.S. track, and was flying away from that track, then the aircraft would have continued on the magnetic heading selected previously." Less technically, the computer program of that particular I.N.S. required KE007 to be within a fifteen-mile-wide corridor straddling the desired course before it could "capture" the track and steer the aircraft toward its destination. The local curve of the earth's magnetic field close to the North Pole had carried KE007 just beyond the limit. Although the I.N.S. may have appeared to be guiding the plane, the compass was in fact still steering it, farther and farther away from safety, closer and closer to Soviet airspace. In the cockpit, the only indication that the I.N.S. was not engaged would have been that two small indicator panels were amber when they should have been green. The error is rare. Captain Chun may never have seen amber panels, except perhaps in training, years before.

HEADED out over the trackless North Pacific, KE007 crossed the international date line without ceremony and flew into a new day—September 1, 1983, the official date of the tragedy. After the plane's disappearance was reported, further positive, unambiguous information ceased and name-calling took over—internationally, between the United States and the Soviet Union, and at home, in the domestic politics of both superpowers. The first disclosure to the press that KE007 might have been shot down was made in Washington by Secretary of State George Shultz. He announced that Soviet radar had tracked an unknown target for more than two hours, and that a Soviet fighter pilot had destroyed the target with a missile.

Soviet officials at first denied all knowledge of anything that might have happened at that time and place, then claimed that their air defenses had "tried to give assistance [to an intruder plane] in directing it to the nearest airfield," but the intruder had "continued its flight in the direction of the Sea of Japan"—as indeed it did, in its downward death spiral. Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, the Soviet chief of staff, claimed to have proof that KE007 was on a "deliberate, thoroughly planned intelligence operation . . . directed from certain centers . . . in the territory of the United States and Japan."

The exchange of vilification soon reached summit levels, each side citing the KE007 incident as proof of the evil nature of the other's politics. Charging that the Soviets had knowingly destroyed a civilian airliner, President Ronald Reagan called the shootdown a "terrorist act," a "heinous act," and an "atrocity," adding, "As civilized societies, we ask searching questions about the nature of regimes where such standards do not apply." Yuri Andropov, the General Secretary of the Communist Party, who was in failing health, surfaced to denounce "the sophisticated provocation masterminded by the United States special services with the use of a South Korean plane" as "an example of extreme adventurism in politics"—a way of saying that the Central Intelligence Agency, or Reagan himself, had callously sent two hundred and sixty-nine people to their death.

Reagan's first harsh denunciations of the Soviets turned out to be counterproductive, and they were later toned down by the State Department. A poll taken in mid-September of 1983 showed that three Americans out of five believed that the United States government was withholding vital information about the KE007 disaster. Even so, the disaster had no noticeable effect on Reagan's reëlection the following year. Quite by chance, it slowly emerged that a sizable proportion of Soviet citizens similarly doubted their own government's version of the KE007 affair.

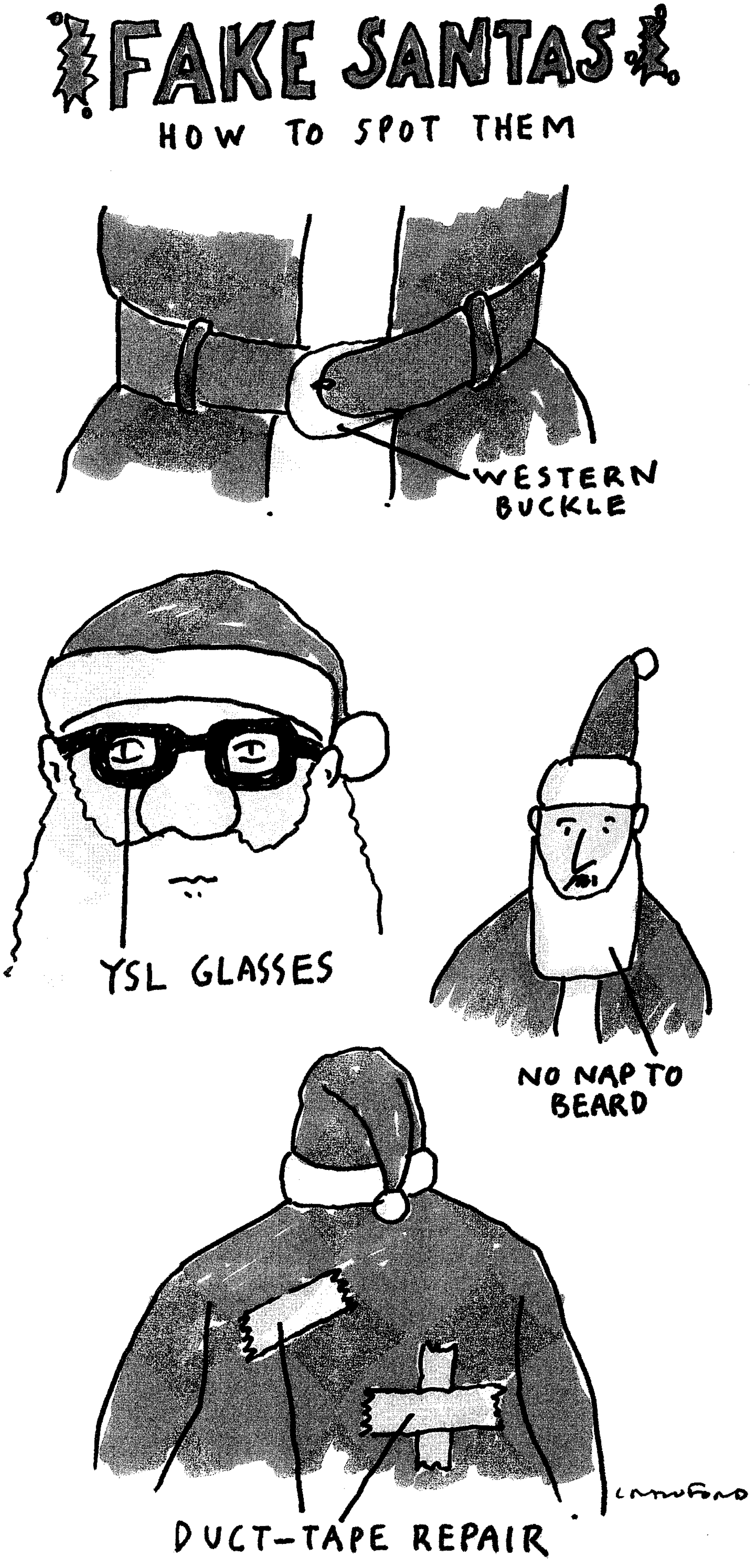
Having received help from the British Civil Aviation Authority (and drawing upon a background in ocean-yacht-racing navigation), I published (in the London *Sunday Times* of May 20 and 27, 1984, and in *The New York Review of Books* of April 25, 1985) a magnetic-heading explanation of how KE007 came to accidentally overfly the Soviet Union—an account now confirmed by the recovered black boxes. People knowledgeable about air navigation (notably the American Air Line Pilots Association) were convinced, but spy-flight theories continued to proliferate: they included at least five major television documentaries and dramatizations, seven books, and more than a hundred magazine and newspaper articles. Little attention was paid to the Soviet side of the shootdown, largely because, despite the death of Yuri Andropov, in 1984, and the rise of the would-be reformer Mikhail Gorbachev a year later, the Soviet military kept all KE007 information in a seemingly unyielding grip.

One or two breaks kept alive my hope that one day the truth might emerge. In 1985, I stumbled across a strange little paperback, "President's Crime: Who Ordered the Espionage Flight of KAL 007?," by Akio Takahashi, which had been published by Ningensha, a one-room firm in Tokyo. Takahashi is, I believe, a pen name. "President's Crime" is a slovenly ragbag of technical illiteracies, abuse of Ronald Reagan, and telltale slips ("CR-71" for the American SR-71 reconnaissance plane). These clues to a Cyrillic origin, plus the book's publishing history—a thousand copies each in English and Japanese, printed in Tokyo; a hundred thousand in Russian, put out by the Soviet news agency Novosti—identified "President's Crime" as a hasty disinformation job aimed at readers not in the West (where it sank without review or trace) but in the Soviet Union. Evidently, many people there must have still needed convincing that Reagan was wrong, and that the destruction of KE007 had not been, as it plainly seemed to have been, a "heinous act" by their side.

How riveting, then, to find amid this unconvincing sludge a clearly written chapter on aviation law, offering the legal case for the shootdown. The author or authors of the chapter cite the relevant laws—Article 53 of the Soviet Air Code, and Article 36 of the Law on the State Border on the U.S.S.R. Read together, as the chapter recommends, these two laws closed the whole of Soviet airspace to "intruder" aircraft, and "in instances in which the violation cannot be stopped or the violator detained by any other means" Article 36 *instructed* the "frontier guard troops and air-defense forces . . . to use weapons and combat equipment"—in plainer Russian, to shoot the intruder down. KE007, undoubtedly an intruder, was shot down just before, or even just after, it left Soviet airspace, by which time "other means" had indeed been half-heartedly tried. Article 36, "President's Crime" revealed, had been enacted on November 24, 1982, and Article 53 on May 11, 1983, even nearer the date of the shootdown. They gave commanders no discretion and allowed no exceptions, even for lost or straying airliners. Why had these laws been passed? Had they, in fact, caused, and not simply justified, the murderous outcome?

The Soviet coverup began to unravel in January of 1991, in the last year of the Gorbachev regime, when the Soviet government newspaper *Izvestiya* began the publication of a thirteen-part series, "Secret of the Korean Boeing 747," by Andrei Illesh, one of its senior editors. Illesh merits the admiration of journalists everywhere—an honorary Pulitzer, if there were such an award, would be appropriate. Years of investigation financed by well-meaning, gullible people in the United States had turned up nothing more helpful than a surreal message supposedly sent from KE007 in its last minutes: "Hold your bogies north. Had a bloodbath, real bad." Needless to say, nothing remotely resembling this gibberish can be heard in the black-box cockpit recording. By contrast, Illesh, in only his second article, made a genuine, and sensational, breakthrough.

When Illesh asked Marshal of Aviation Pyotr Semyonovich Kirsanov to comment on yet another widely publicized, fanciful theory—that KE007 had been shot down in a dogfight between Soviet and American jets over the Pacific—Kirsanov had said, "Nonsense!" and added, "After all, the aircraft was



found." (Kirsanov had been sent from Moscow the day after the shootdown to find out what had happened.) This was the first time a senior Soviet officer had admitted not only having found the remains of KE007 but also having withheld such vital evidence from the I.C.A.O. inquiry, which the Soviets had claimed to be helping. Heartless enough, but as the Illesh series continued an even more callous coverup started to come apart.

Illesh began his long search for the truth, he told his readers, almost as soon as he heard, and doubted, the official Soviet version. He started his unofficial investigation in the summer of 1984, by spending his regular vacation visiting Sakhalin, the Soviet island flown over by KE007. His Aeroflot plane landed at Sokol, the airfield from which Major Osipovich had taken off on the night of the shootdown. Illesh soon started to pick up rumors that objects recovered from KE007 had been passed around the town. Then he was shown photographs of scraps of clothing, of American bills, of purses—"the junk passengers take on international flights." He asked what had happened to this material. "They destroyed everything that was turned in," his informant told him. Who were "they"? "There were quite a few of these people with military haircuts but no uniforms." Whispers said that not everything had been destroyed—that Western-music tapes from the downed airliner were played over the Sakhalin military radio, and had been clearly picked up in nearby Japan.

Next, Illesh learned that in early September, immediately after the shootdown, an oil-drilling ship, the Mikhail Mirchink—built in Finland, it was one of only three vessels in the Soviet Union capable of holding a precise position at sea without anchoring—had joined the search for KE007's wreckage. According to one of Illesh's informants, Soviet trawlers pretended to trawl around the Mikhail Mirchink to keep American and Japanese search ships at a distance while a decoy black box with a false "pinger," or sound marker, was thrown into the sea to deceive American searchers. (This stratagem would explain a premature report that the United States Navy had found, and then lost, the black boxes.) In mid-October, after a Soviet Navy ship dredged up what looked like wreckage from the downed plane, civilian divers from Murmansk—the best in the Soviet Union—were flown in to take up the search.

These men worked almost a month in a primitive diving bell at a depth of five hundred and sixty-five feet; they slept on the drilling ship in a dank compression chamber, leaving it only to return to the seabed. On October 17 or 18, 1983, six weeks after the shootdown, the Soviet divers found the wreckage of KE007 and began hauling it to the surface. No announcement of the discovery was made, then or later.

The airliner, the divers told *Izvestiya's* man, was by then a heap of scrap metal, in places five feet deep in the sandy seabed. One of the larger pieces of aluminum they found—three feet by five—bore the divided-circle, yin-and-yang logo of Korean Air Lines. Knives and forks had been twisted by the impact, mirrors in women's handbags smashed, bodies shredded, clothing torn to rags. The divers estimated that KE007 had been travelling at six hundred miles an hour when it hit the sea. Human remains were sparse. "No one asked us to recover people's remains," one of the divers said. "Only components, tapes, documents, the black boxes." And, one diver told Illesh, "two bright-orange balls, the size of volleyballs," were indeed found in the wreckage, were examined by experts from the Academy of Sciences, and were taken, immersed in sea water, to Moscow. No spying equipment was found, the divers told Illesh.

For their heroic work, the divers got secret commendations from Fleet Admiral S. G. Gorshkov, the commander-in-chief of the Soviet Navy, and awards of two hundred to two hundred and fifty rubles, then worth two hundred and sixty to three hundred and thirty dollars. Illesh speculates that they were given such a small amount so they would forget the whole thing. The journalist ended his first series of articles not knowing

GUIDED TOUR OF A WELL-KNOWN HOUSE

You cannot bring yourself to see the nursery
because it would remind you of your own;
nor do you wish to see the unthankful cellars
which are the same as all unthankful cellars,
or the gray gloaming in the unused kitchens,
the vestibules and drawing rooms,
the look-constricting corridors
teeming with warning signs and little stories
scrawled on the walls,
in blood, by roving relatives.
You have to give the sacred rooms a miss
in which the occupants learned the art of thinking;
the legendary rooms, too, for that matter,
which are now empty, reek of emptiness.
The torture chambers merit not one glimpse,
nor do the lofts, the quite insatiable lofts.
You pass the whispering galleries by,
and also give a wide berth to each door,
behind which Memory is working,
floor by floor.
The house is shedding history.
You sink down on the lowest step,
putting your weary feet upon the threshold,
on the threshold which was once God-fearing,
then get them to describe to you
the only room a look has never ravaged.

—MICHAEL KRUGER

(*Translated, from the German, by Richard Dove.*)

whether KE007's black boxes still existed, much less where they might be. However, his investigation produced a result well known to Western reporters: informants began telephoning him—many of them anonymously—with leads.

Izvestiya resumed publication of its investigation in May of 1991, this time with a fascinating disclosure of the central role that Yuri Andropov played in the KE007 tragedy. A former K.G.B. chief, Andropov became General Secretary of the Communist Party in November of 1982, Illesh reminded his readers, and "clearly understood that the country was sliding toward disaster." Andropov's remedy, Illesh explained, was "the use of immense ideological machinery to renew the Communist ideal, greatly damaged by the then universal pilfering, bribe-taking, and nepotism." One aspect of Andropov's zeal, Illesh noted, was to step up ideological confrontations, notably with the United States.

"The temperature of the Cold War—conducted, naturally, by both sides—rose to boiling point," Illesh recalled. This rise, he went on, led to a series of provocative naval and air maneuvers off the coast of the Soviet Far East, which, in turn, precipitated a new Law on the State Border, "adopted with Andropov's direct participation." In essence, Illesh wrote, this was a directive straight from the top: "Check the solidity of the locks along our entire border." Andropov was directly involved in the KE007 coverup, Illesh explained, at least to the extent that he "was satisfied that an intruder plane was destroyed over Sakhalin in full conformance with the newly adopted Law on the State Border." He adds, "The 269 passengers were not, and could not be, taken into account."

Much is made, both by Western writers and in the newly released Soviet transcripts, of a seven-minute flight on April 4, 1983, by fighters from the United States Navy carriers Midway and Enterprise, over a small island, Zeleny Ostrov (in Japanese, it is Shibotsu Jima)—one of the southern Kurile Islands, whose sovereignty Russia and Japan dispute. This speck of lava, ten miles long and two wide, within sight of the Japanese coast, could scarcely be reckoned vital to the defense of the Soviet Union. The flight, officially called a "dry bombing run" by the Soviets and a "navigational error" by the United States Navy, was characterized to Illesh by a Soviet officer with a rare grasp of American military psychology as a "sporting-provocative gesture." Furious—or pretending to be, in line with the new Andropov policy—the Soviet military, on April 6th, protested to the American Embassy in Moscow. Fearing that an apology, by obliquely recognizing Soviet sovereignty over the Kuriles, would irritate the Japanese, the State Department responded evasively. Innocently lost, KE007 was flying toward a lethal, Soviet-legal ambush.

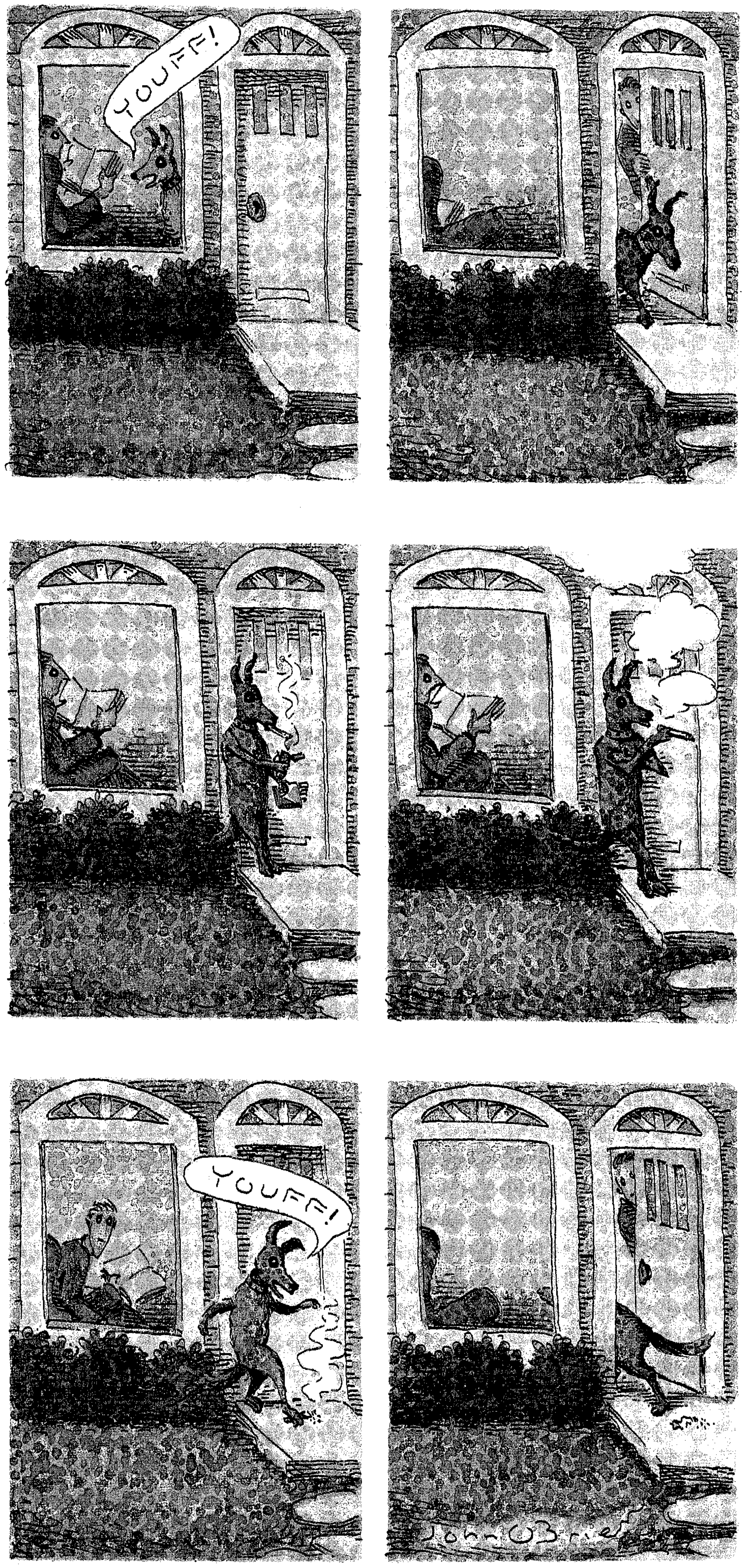
The failed coup against Mikhail Gorbachev two years ago, the rise of Boris Yeltsin, and the subsequent demise of the Soviet Communist Party unexpectedly helped complete Illesh's investigation. Last fall, an anonymous tipster—possibly an out-of-work K.G.B. man or an undernourished freelance writer busy combing the Party archives for scoops to sell to the Western media—called *Izvestiya* with a tipoff: he had stumbled on an interesting set of documents about the Korean airliner. The classified documents were published by *Izvestiya* on October 16th, 1992, with a letter from Yeltsin commending the public-spirited journalists who had dug them up.

The purpose of the documents, addressed to "Comrade Yu. V. Andropov" and dated November 18, 1983, was to inform Andropov of the contents of the airliner's black boxes, secretly recovered from the wreckage and analyzed in Moscow by experts from the Soviet Defense Ministry, the K.G.B., and, to his shame, an official named Svishchev from the Soviet Ministry of Civil Aviation, an organization that was duty bound to protect the lives of air passengers. The experts reported KE007's holding of a constant magnetic heading (they made it 249 degrees), its innocently steady altitude, the lack of any evasive maneuvers, and the unincriminating cockpit chatter. As delicately as only underlings in dictatorships know how, the experts gave the boss the bad news: "We did not succeed in obtaining outright proof that the flight was performing an intelligence mission." Ritually endorsing the "major dual-purpose political provocation carefully organized by the U.S. special services," on which Andropov had already gone public (never make a liar out of your General Secretary, even in a classified report), the experts recommended a coverup: "It seems advisable to refrain from handing over the recorders to the International Civil Aviation Organization . . . and to keep these recorders' presence in the U.S.S.R. a secret."

In August of 1992, just six weeks before the documents were published, Yeltsin, steadily inserting his own people into the highest military commands, appointed Lieutenant General Fyodor Ladygin the head of the G.R.U. KE007's black boxes were soon found in the G.R.U.'s archives. Last January, after an offer to South Korea of the boxes but only copies of the tapes they once contained, boxes and tapes were handed to the I.C.A.O. in Paris, to be examined by a second set of experts, this time French. Shortly afterward, unasked for, came nine hours of detailed radar traces and recordings of the orders and counter-orders given by Soviet officers on Sakhalin that night. At long last, the truth about the KE007 shootdown was about to break.

As the I.C.A.O. now reconstructs the tragedy, some three hours after takeoff KE007, still steered by its compass, crossed the track of an American RC-135 reconnaissance aircraft that was on its way home from its duty station, flying over international waters, two hundred miles east of the Kamchatka Peninsula. The RC-135, a modified Boeing 707, was crammed with electronic gear designed to monitor a Soviet ballistic-missile test that had been scheduled for that same night but had subsequently been cancelled. Although the RC-135 flight was unpublicized, it was not illegal or especially sinister: such flights were part of the "national technical means of verification" mentioned, though coyly not described, in the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty then in force between the superpowers. The RC-135 completed its leisurely sentry run off the Kamchatka coast, well north of KE007's track, and was back on the ground on Shemya Island, one of the Aleutians, a full hour before the shootdown.

The Soviets were, in routine fashion, following the lazy orbiting of the RC-135 with ground-based radar operating at extreme range, assigning to its track the code number 6065. At one point, Track 6065 faded as the RC-135 turned for home. A


YOUFF!
YOUFF!
John O'Brien

short time later, a blip reappeared on the Soviet radar screens, in roughly the same general area, and was reassigned the same number, 6065, with the added notation "one unidentified aircraft." The new blip was not the RC-135, however, but KE007, still moving steadily southwest, its track meandering gently under the influence of fickle winds and the changing magnetic variation. At 5:33 A.M., local time, Track 6065 entered Soviet airspace and thus became an intruder, targeted for destruction by Andropov's inflexible new border-defense law.

As KE007 crossed the Kamchatka coastline, at least four Soviet fighters scrambled to intercept it. Then, low on fuel, they were forced back to base while KE007 was still being tracked by Kamchatka radar. Illesh explains this embarrassing lapse: after 1976, when Lieutenant Viktor Belenko defected to Japan with a MIG-25, "they began to fuel the aircraft in such a fashion that a Soviet pilot would not have enough fuel . . . to reach the nearest foreign airfield."

Her crew still unaware that anything was amiss, KE007 flew over Kamchatka and on out to sea, and faded from the radar screens. Mortified, the people on duty at the Kamchatka command center informed their opposite numbers on Sakhalin Island, on the other side of the Sea of Okhotsk, that an intruder "provisionally identified as an RC-135" was headed their way.

THE southern part of Sakhalin Island is nine minutes' flying time wide—twelve including a small outlying island. Soviet fighters have already taken off as the intruder approaches, still on its treacherous compass heading, the passengers sound asleep, the crew half dozing at the controls. KE007 is flying over international waters as two Soviet officers at the Sokol fighter base are recorded having one of the ugliest exchanges of the Cold War era:

"Orders have been given to destroy."

"Simply destroy, even if it is over neutral waters? Are the orders to destroy it over neutral waters? Oh, well."

Twenty minutes earlier, a Major Valiuntovich has reassured the officers that the intruder was not one of their own. "They say none of ours are out there, none . . . on that route. . . ."

"What?"

"I'm saying that is the only time they have taken that route."

"Understood."

But Captain Solodkov, the combat-control officer at the Sokol base, is still not quite convinced. Elementary military prudence, recognizable the world over, is restraining him: "Somehow, this all looks very suspicious to me. I don't think the enemy is stupid, so—could this be one of ours?"

As KE007 flies serenely on, the confusion thickens on the ground.

"Has the meteorologist arrived?"

"Comrade Lieutenant Colonel, the meteorologist left for the control tower."

"Who is speaking?"

"The controller. He went there by bicycle."

KE007 is still over the open sea when Major Osipovich, approaching from behind in his SU-15 fighter, tells ground control that he sees the airliner's flashing anticollision beacon: "Eight-oh-five, observing the target at altitude ten thousand [metres]."

"Roger, Eight-oh-five."

Up the military hierarchy, ever more senior officers are being brought in. At 6:14 A.M., General Kamenski, the commander of the Far Eastern Air Force, is reached.

"Kamenski here."

"Comrade General, [this is General] Kornukov. Good morning. Track Six-oh-six-five . . . is thirty kilometres from the state border, the fighter from Sokol is six kilometres away. Locked on, orders were given to arm weapons. The target is not responding [to a Soviet electronic friend/foe recognition signal]. He cannot identify it visually because it is still dark, but he is locked on [with missiles]."

"We must find out, maybe it is some civilian craft or God knows who."

"What civilian? [It] has flown over Kamchatka. It [came] from the ocean without identification. I am giving the order to attack if it crosses the state border."

"Go ahead now?"

"Yes, sir. Yes, sir."

Lieutenant Colonel Maistrenko, at the combat-control center, still has a nagging doubt: "[It] may [be] a passenger [aircraft]. All necessary steps must be taken to identify it."

"Identification measures are being taken," the controller tells him, "but the pilot cannot see. It's dark. Even now, it's still dark."

"Well, O.K. The task is correct. If there are no lights—it cannot be a passenger [aircraft]."

"You confirm the task?"

"Yes."

The airliner's flashing lights—which would be suicidal behavior in a deliberate overflight of a heavily defended strategic area—are still troubling Kornukov.

"Does the target have nav lights or not?" Kornukov asks.

"There are nav lights, Comrade General," the fighter regiment commander tells him.

"Tell Osipovich to approach the target, to rock his wings at it and force it to land at Sokol."

While the Soviet officers are querying the all-too-obvious navigation lights, the somnolent crew members of KE007 get a possible hint, veiled in professional courtesy, that there is something wrong with their navigation. Another Korean Air Lines Boeing, Flight KE015, is supposed to be only three minutes—or some thirty-two miles—behind KE007. (Actually, it is three hundred and fifty miles away.) KE015's captain, Park Yong-man, radios to the crew of KE007 that he is experiencing a strong tailwind and seems to be rapidly overtaking KE007, and the KE007 crew asks for the wind details.

"Thirty, um, forty degrees direction [northeast], thirty-five knots."

"Ah! You got so much? We still got headwind. Headwind two hundred fifteen degrees [southeast], fifteen knots."

"Is it so? But, according to flight plan, wind direction three six zero [due north] fifteen knots, approximately."

For aircraft supposedly thirty-two miles apart, this discrepancy is all but impossible. An eight-second puzzled pause is recorded aboard KE007.

It is hard to believe that at least one of the pilots is not scanning the instrument panel. Apparently, everything looks normal. KE007 replies drowsily, "Well, it's possible."

KE007's last chance is gone. The Soviet tapes confirm that a hurried, half-hearted attempt was indeed made to intercept the straying airliner, and, at the same time, the tapes show that the Soviet air defense never made up its collective mind what the "target" was. The fighter pilot broke his electronic lock on KE007, approached the airliner from the right side (how closely the I.C.A.O. could not determine), and fired a warning burst of cannon shells, which were invisible to the airliner. By now, KE007 is a few seconds from safety, and General Kornukov has made a decision:

"Has he fired the warning burst?"

"Affirmative, he has."

"Destroy the target."

"Task received. Destroy Target Six-oh-six-five with missile fire."

As the fighter positions itself to fire, Kornukov worries that KE007 may escape. "Oh, fuck. He is already getting out into neutral waters. Engage afterburner immediately. Bring in the MIG-23 as well. While you are wasting time, it will fly right out."

"He has launched. He fired both missiles. . . . The target turned north."

Kornukov fears that the missiles may have missed and orders, "Bring in the [MIG-] 23 to destroy it."

But the second attack was not needed. KE007 was already spiralling downward, toward the neutral sea.

WHO was to blame? The heaviest responsibility must, of course, be Captain Chun's. A weary man going by the book, he failed to solve a simple but not obvious problem in navigation. He was far from diligent in his position checks, even though the ground-based radio aids he had available that night were inadequate. (They have since been greatly improved.) He showed naïve overconfidence in his instruments. (More prominent warning lights have since been added to all I.N.S. units, and an exact repetition of KE007's mistake is generally thought to be unlikely.) Even so, a navigational error need not and should not have led to a reckless massacre of civilians.

Major Osipovich, who fired the fatal missiles, was, in the well-known phrase, only obeying orders—"a kind of sheep-dog," he later explained. To his hurt and dismay, the promotion and the medals he was told to expect never materialized. "Everyone started regarding me as a son of a bitch," he complained years later to Illesh, of *Izvestiya*, "except, of course, the boys in the regiment." Osipovich had volunteered for night duty on September 1st, he explained, only so he could give a talk on peace at his children's school that same day. Later, injured in a flying accident, he was quietly invalided out of the Air Force, and he now scratches out a living growing strawberries. Osipovich still refuses to accept the fact that he destroyed an airliner. "I never thought for a moment that I could shoot down a passenger aircraft. Anything at all, but not that," he told Illesh. "I could see ahead of me a large aircraft with its lights and flashers switched on. . . . We do not study civilian aircraft belonging to foreign companies. I knew all the military aircraft, all the reconnaissance aircraft. But this was not like any of them.

"The first missile hit near the tail. . . . The second took off half the left wing. The lights and flashers went out immediately. . . . A foreign aircraft was in our airspace for two and a half hours. . . . What order can you give in such a situation? Sit on your hands? . . . You know, even now I cannot really believe that there were passengers on board."

But there were—two hundred and forty of them. Their deaths were mandated by Andropov's pitiless laws sealing the Soviet air borders, which must share much of the blame. The laws' terms—"violator," "intruder"—pepper the orders given by the Soviet generals; the laws were, in fact, directly addressed to them, "the frontier guard troops and air-defense forces." The situation of KE007 in its last moments, seconds from safety, was indeed that of an intruder whose "violation cannot be stopped or the violator detained by any other means"—exactly the case in which the laws gave commanders no discretion in the use of "combat equipment." The laws had no requirement for intruders to be identified, or for them to be guilty of anything at all, beyond mere intrusion.

Andropov's aviation laws explain why KE007 was shot down with no real attempt made to find out what it was. They also explain why Osipovich fired his missiles at an aircraft that he knew was not an RC-135 or any other American reconnaissance aircraft. In ten years' service in the Far East, he told *Izvestiya,* he had flown more than a thousand interceptions of American military aircraft, and he knew their silhouettes and markings well. KE007, he recognized, was not one of them. But Osipovich did not volunteer this information to his ground controller, beyond noting the intruder's flashing navigational lights. As a final indication that the Law on the State Border made KE007's fate inevitable, the law was unobtrusively replaced, earlier this year, by a Russian Federation aviation code more in line with the codes of other countries.

"If you can hear me, give me a sign."

IRONICALLY, despite Andropov's apparent success in turning the shootdown to his own advantage and shifting at least some of the blame to the United States, the ultimate result of KE007 was the collapse of the Communist system, according to Illesh. He wrote, in language familiar in the West, "Osipovich's missile shot . . . brought benefits to both individual people and the entire [Soviet] military-industrial complex: the latter received a new stimulus to expand and devour larger and larger portions of the budget. (Of course: there are aggressor-spies all around us! And the familiar one: What if this Boeing was carrying a hydrogen bomb? Imagine!) It was for this purpose that a large-scale sea operation to cover up the tracks was mounted.

"We have to admit, though, that in this situation Reagan outmaneuvered Andropov. Having called us 'the evil empire' and scared us with unknown space weaponry, he forced the Soviet Union onto such a high-pressure track in the arms race that it would (this was obvious) break the Soviet Union's economic back. . . . Then our country was let down precisely by that two-dimensional system of political coördinates which recognized only one color—red—and branded everything else black."

So the KE007 coverup in the end backfired. The recovery of the black boxes and the truth they revealed must have been known soon, and fairly widely, in the Soviet Union. The compilers of "President's Crime" suggest as much: the book's puzzling claim that "short signals regularly used for passing information on the radio waves were emitting from the plane" turns out to refer to a faulty reading of stray bursts of Morse code *picked up* by KE007 and recorded in the black box by the cockpit microphones. But the Soviets' find was, for nine years, unsuspected in the West, and that comfortable credulity partly explains the longevity and popularity of Western spy-flight scenarios—all, however fantastic, faithfully cited as credible by the Soviet media, right through the Gorbachev years.

This undeserved success of the Soviet propaganda machine itself calls for some explanations. One is that we all have a natural suspicion of governments—no bad thing in itself, although in this case the wrong government drew most of the suspicion. Another is that the enormous improvement in air safety brought about by the I.N.S., combined with the reluctance of the airline industry to discuss safety issues, has led to a widespread public perception that navigational mistakes belong to the past. There never was, in fact, an intellectually respectable case for any spy-flight theory: those exponents mostly jumped to their conclusions first and looked for evidence afterward. The complexities of air navigation, as muddled by academic students of politics, added to the general confusion, as did the media's hunger for murky mystery. "Conspiracies are sexy," a London TV producer told me. "Accidents are not."

Is the United States, then, cleared of all charges? Of waging its own ideological offensive, the United States is, of course, guilty. Of sponsoring a spy flight, not guilty. Of tampering with possibly significant evidence, not proved. Residual suspicion now focusses on the records of the military radars at Cape Newenham, south of Bethel, and Cape Romanzof, to its north. KE007 passed between them as it headed out over the North Pacific on its last flight. Cape Newenham radar was certainly tracking KE007 that night; we know from the radar trace recorded there that the airliner was already twelve miles off track as it passed Bethel, due north of Newenham. The trace ends just before Bethel, where it would have shown that KE007 did not make a six-degree track change, and so was not being steered by its I.N.S. and was flying into danger.

Newenham and Romanzof, whose purpose is to monitor aircraft entering American airspace, were almost certainly following KE007 beyond Bethel, although neither was part of the civil-aviation-radar system. Why does the Cape Newenham trace end at Bethel, just when important information was about to be recorded? In March of 1985, the Justice Department informed the United States District Court in Washington, D.C.—where families of the crash victims had brought a suit against, among others, the United States government—that the Air Force had routinely re-used the radar tape shortly after the shootdown, having "no idea that it was going to be involved, or that the data would be useful in the litigation [over KE007] at any point." In 1993, the I.C.A.O. investigators (none of them American) simply report, in a rather brusque paragraph, that "representatives of the United States" have informed them that they were "unable to uncover any observations . . . of a westbound aircraft north of the airways"—although KE007, we know, must have crossed this sensitive region.

Behind the I.C.A.O.'s question and the American response hovers an unspoken suggestion: If someone had noticed that KE007 was off course, he or she might have warned the crew, and perhaps averted the tragedy. The military radar system was not supposed to supervise civil air traffic, but, it might be argued, had a moral and perhaps a common-law legal duty to do so, under the Good Samaritan principle, which has never been tested in court in the field of aviation. The I.C.A.O. investigators deal equally suspiciously with a suggestion that the words "persons should warn them" can be faintly heard on a tape recorded in the Anchorage air-traffic-control center, perhaps as crosstalk from a nearby telephone landline. "It was concluded that it was not possible to determine what was said," the I.C.A.O. report says—a hint that the United States may not have been totally forthcoming here.

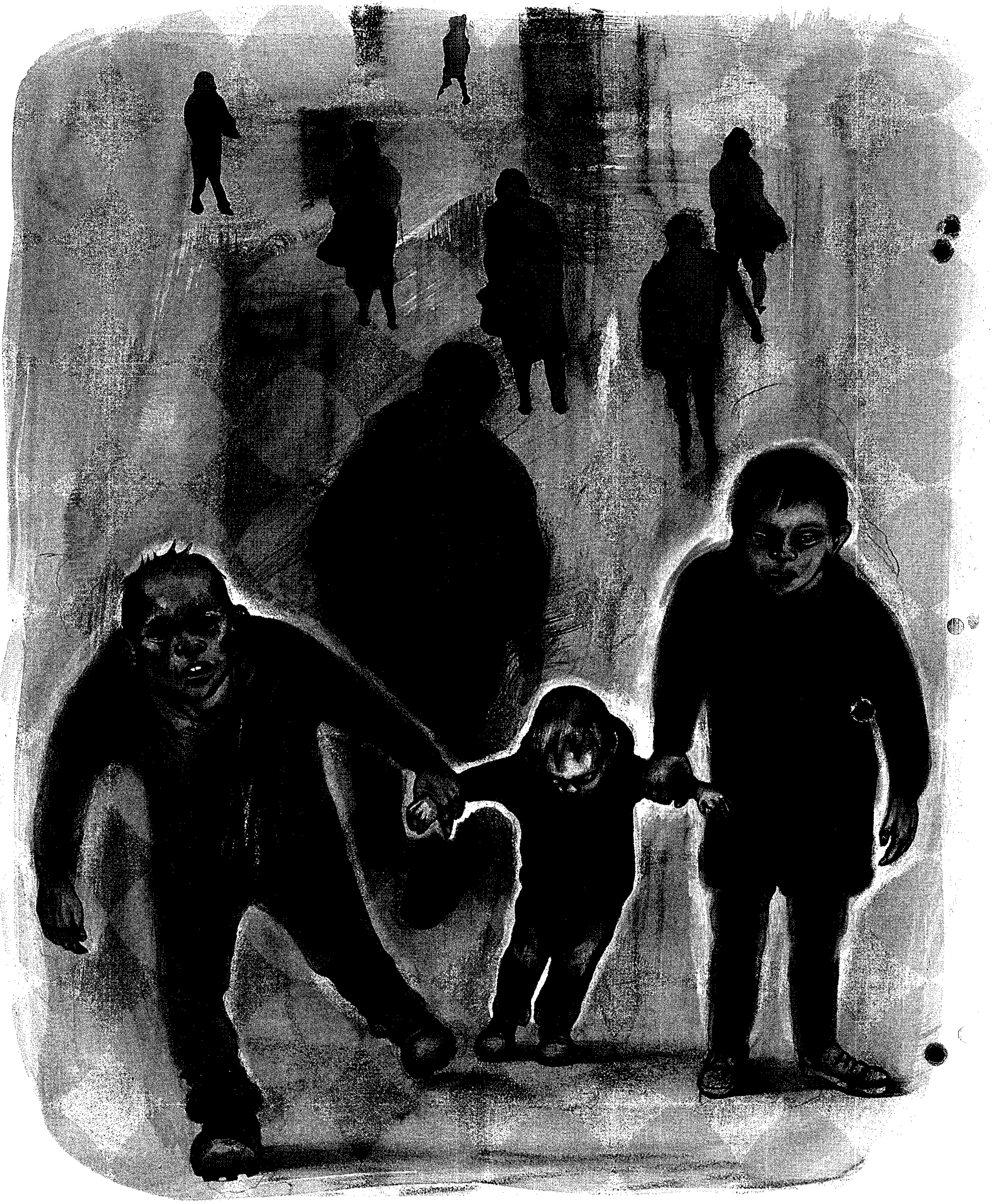
THE subsequent fortunes of the Soviet military men involved in the KE007 shootdown point to a conflict on the subject between the high command and the post-Andropov civilian leadership—a conflict that is apparently still unresolved. After being officially hailed, according to himself, as "a hero," Major Osipovich was sidelined and is now a disgruntled and lonely gardener. Colonel General Semyon Romanov, chief of staff at the Soviet air-defense headquarters, in Moscow, was relieved of his responsibilities immediately after the shootdown and sent to inspect Soviet forces in East Germany—a colonial posting and therefore a demotion. Romanov was the first Soviet spokesman to mention the RC-135. In a Tass news conference, Romanov implied that the Soviets had mistaken KE007 for the American reconnaissance aircraft—a tacit admission of faulty recognition. Romanov committed suicide in May of 1984. The *Izvestiya* team has speculated that he may have brooded over the injustice of his demotion—whether it was for speaking out of turn or for allowing KE007 to fly right across Kamchatka without being intercepted, which was seen as a blot on the professional competence of the Soviet defense forces.

Both the Soviet-command recordings and the *Izvestiya* articles mention the four-star general Ivan Moiseyevich Tretyak, the commander of the Far East military district at the time, as the officer who gave the final order to destroy KE007. Tretyak was later named head of the Soviet civil-defense system, a move sidewise; but after the nineteen-year-old daredevil West German pilot Mathias Rust flew a Cessna 172 through the Soviet air defenses to land in Moscow's Red Square (according to *Izvestiya,* two radar officers were given four and five years in a labor camp for negligence) Tretyak was promoted to command the entire Soviet Air Defense Forces, a post he held until 1991.

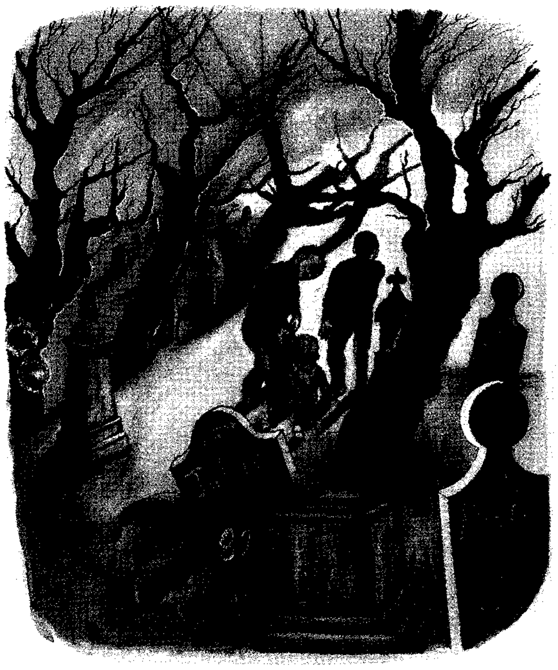
So it seems clear that the Soviet military establishment, defying all the evidence, closed ranks around the hard-line theory that KE007 was engaged in a "dual-purpose political provocation organized by the U.S. special services." The thesis, which is occasionally featured in the writings of Western conspiracy theorists, is that Captain Chun was bribed, persuaded, or ordered to fly over the Soviet Union on a kind of even-money gamble: if he was shot down, the incident could be used to "whip up anti-Soviet hysteria"; if he succeeded, then the American "special services" could taunt the Soviet air defenses with their inefficiency. This is a highly unlikely propaganda ploy in the real world but is the kind of thing likely to haunt the sleepless nights of touchy military men.

ALTHOUGH the Cold War itself was the essential background of the KE007 tragedy, history will want to know who made the fatal decision. Even the cruellest laws do not enforce themselves. Early in 1991, Andrei Illesh bearded Ivan Tretyak in his Moscow headquarters. The interview was brief. The General anticipated the journalist's question "Who made the decision to destroy the plane?" with a surly triple counter-question: "Who needs this investigation? Who is behind it? Who ordered it?"

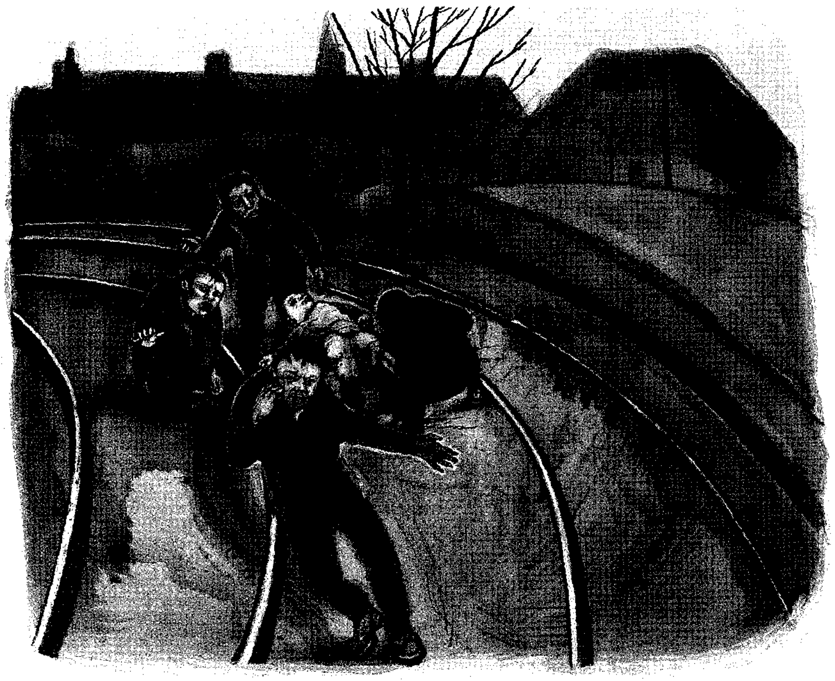
"Conscience, in the final analysis," Illesh replied. ♦



A surveillance video camera captured two juveniles leading the toddler away from the mall where he had been shopping with his mother.



They dragged him through open streets and a graveyard.

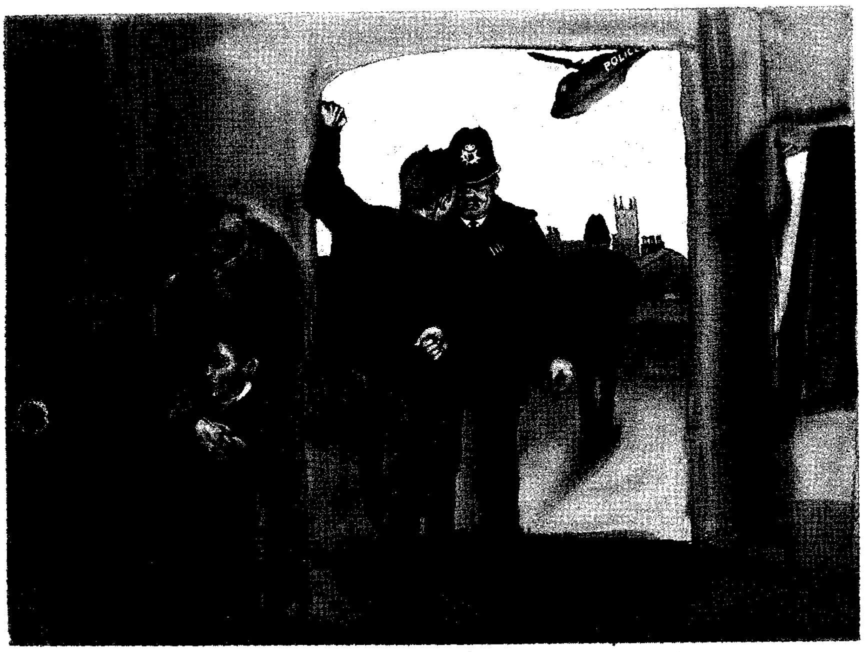


Four boys playing on the tracks discovered the mutilated body.

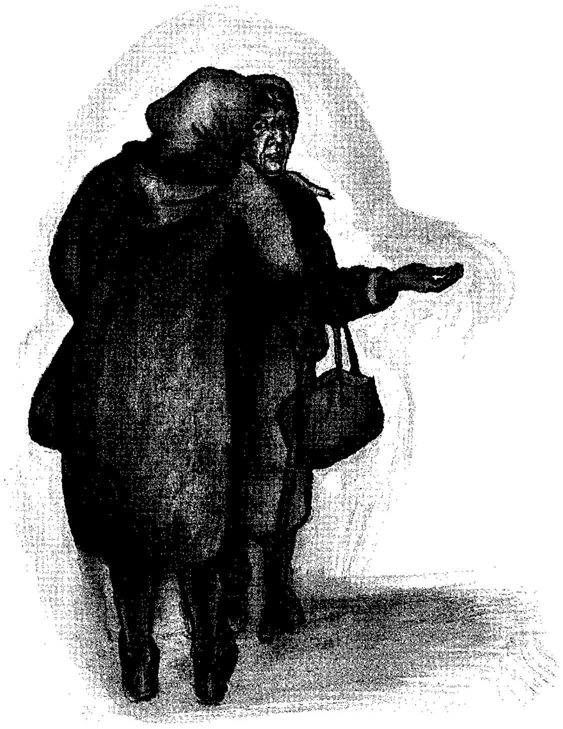
Liverpool's Children

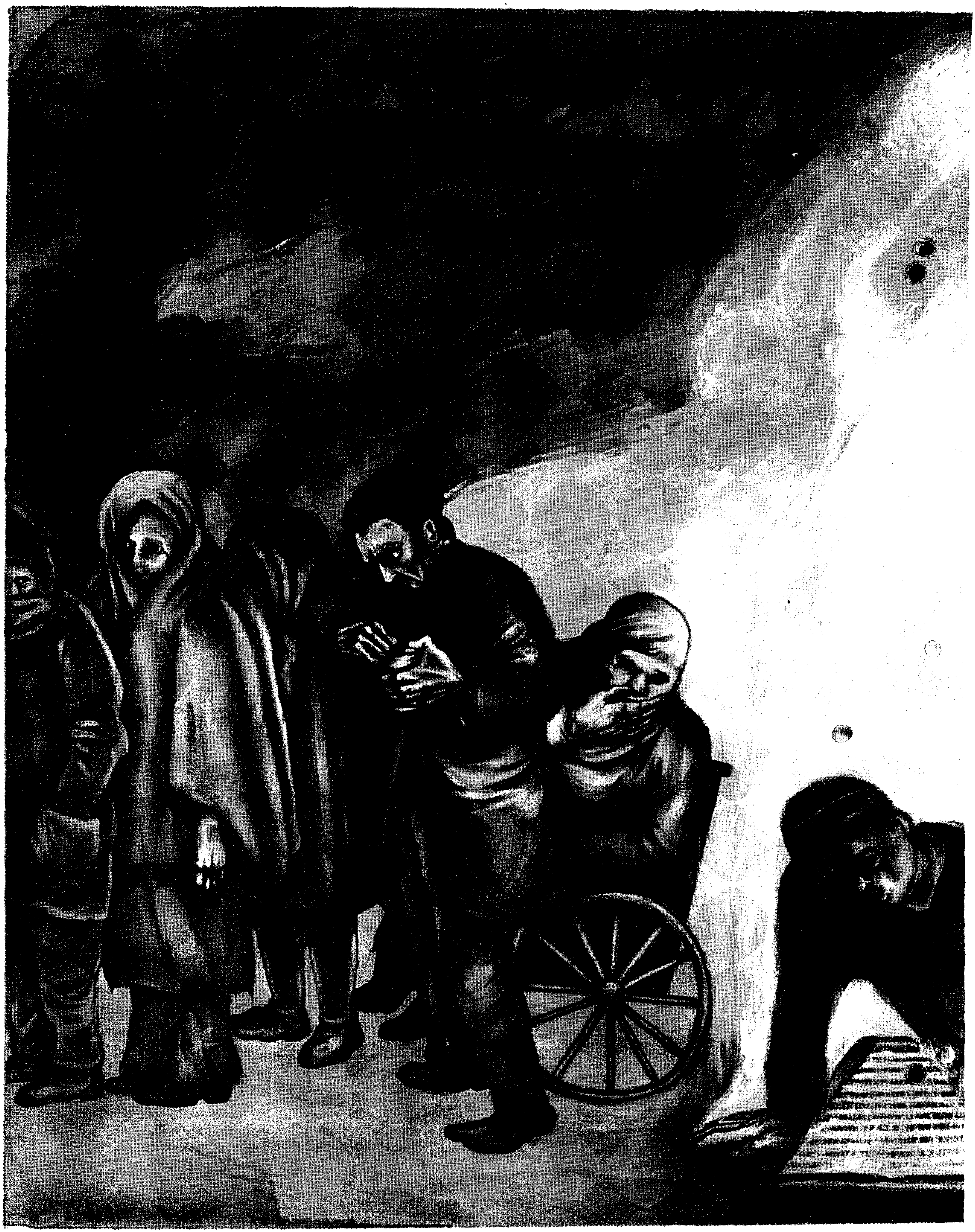
In England last month, Robert Thompson and Jon Venables, both eleven, were sentenced to indefinite terms of custody for the brutal murder of two-year-old James Bulger. Sue Coe, whose family lives in Liverpool, returns to a city mourning the tragedy of three of its children, to find the world that shaped them.

BY SUE COE

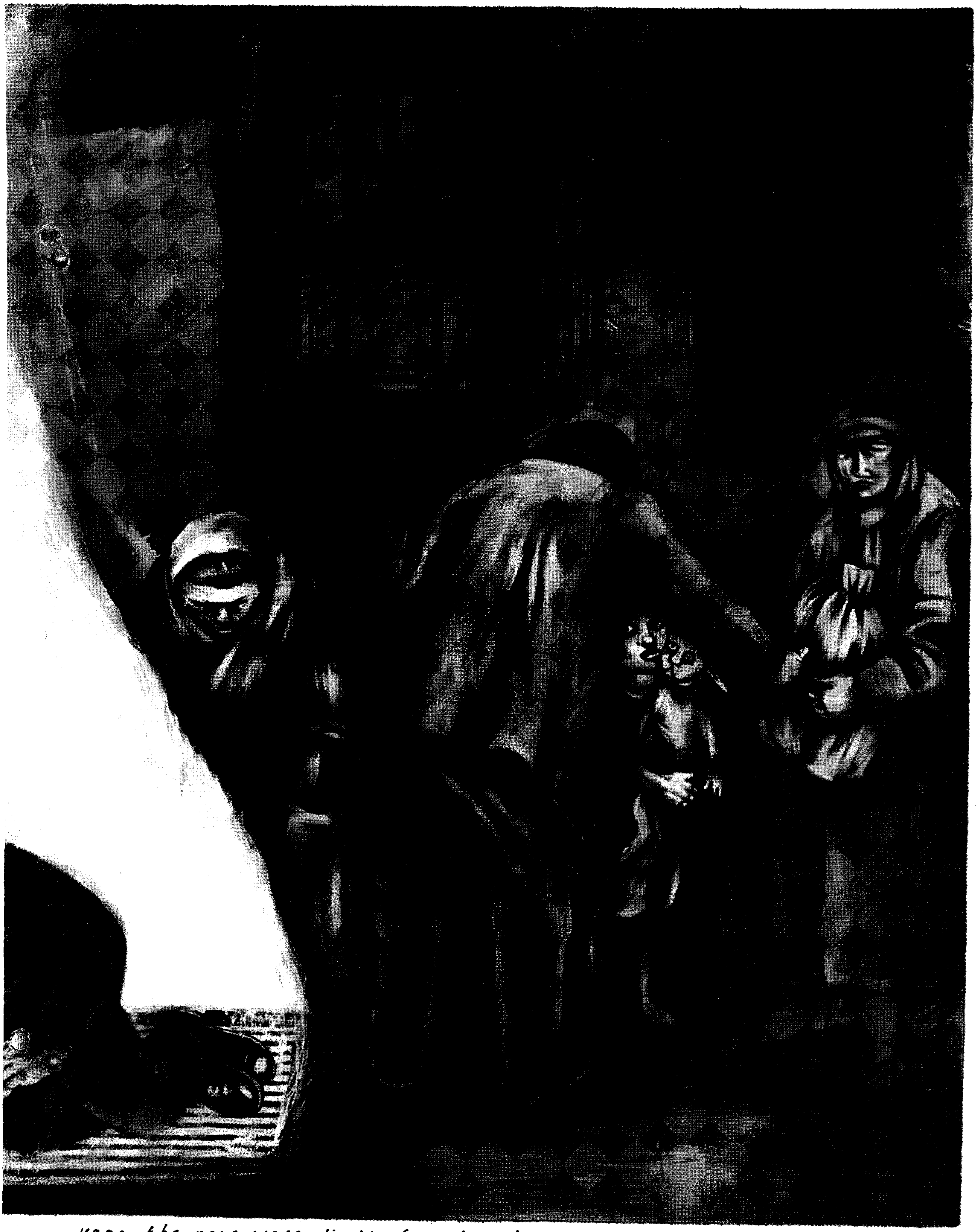


The police visited the homes of more than a hundred and thirty-five boys. After a suspect was released, there were near-riots.

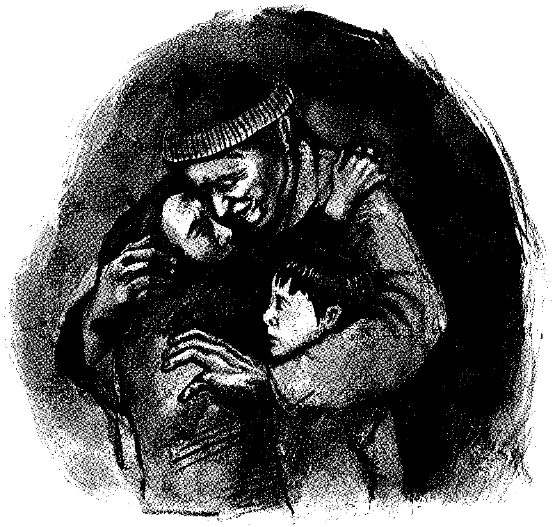




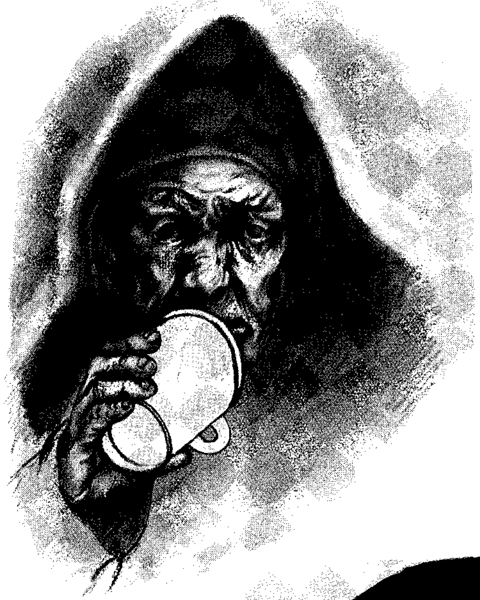
The Liverpool Quality of Life Survey contends that forty per cent of the population lives in poverty, approximately twice the national rate. Even so, until the notorious poll tax was replaced, earlier this

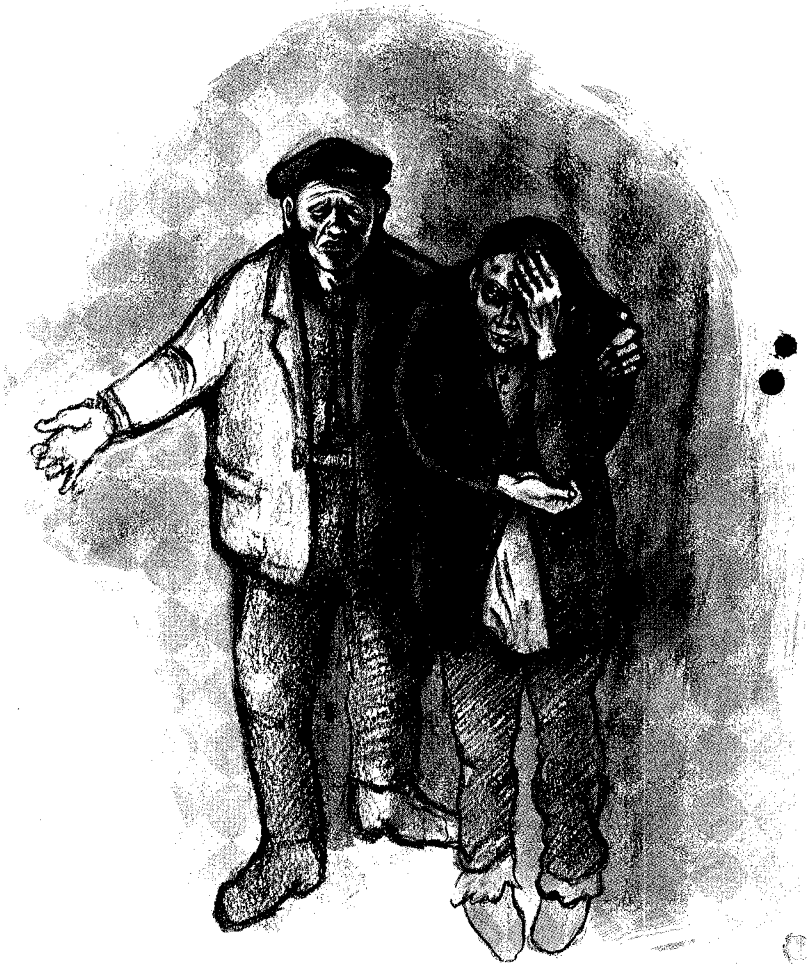


year, the poor were liable for that, too. Here people wait in line outside a court building. Many are threatened with eviction for nonpayment of rent.

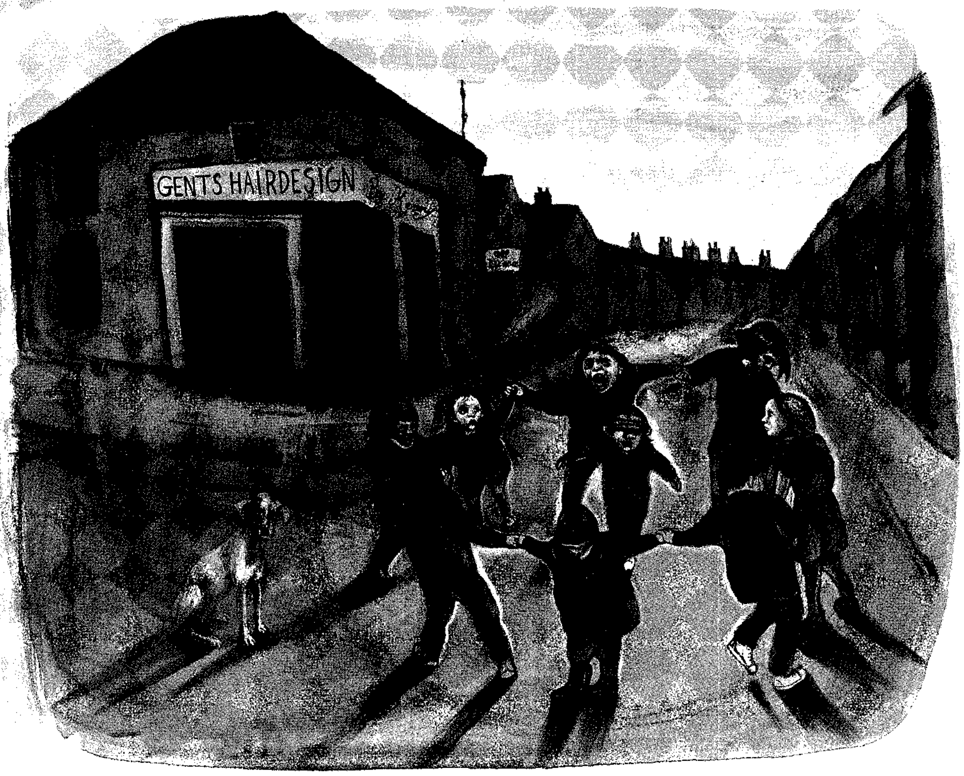


Laid-off man: "What do I feed them on? I got nothing."

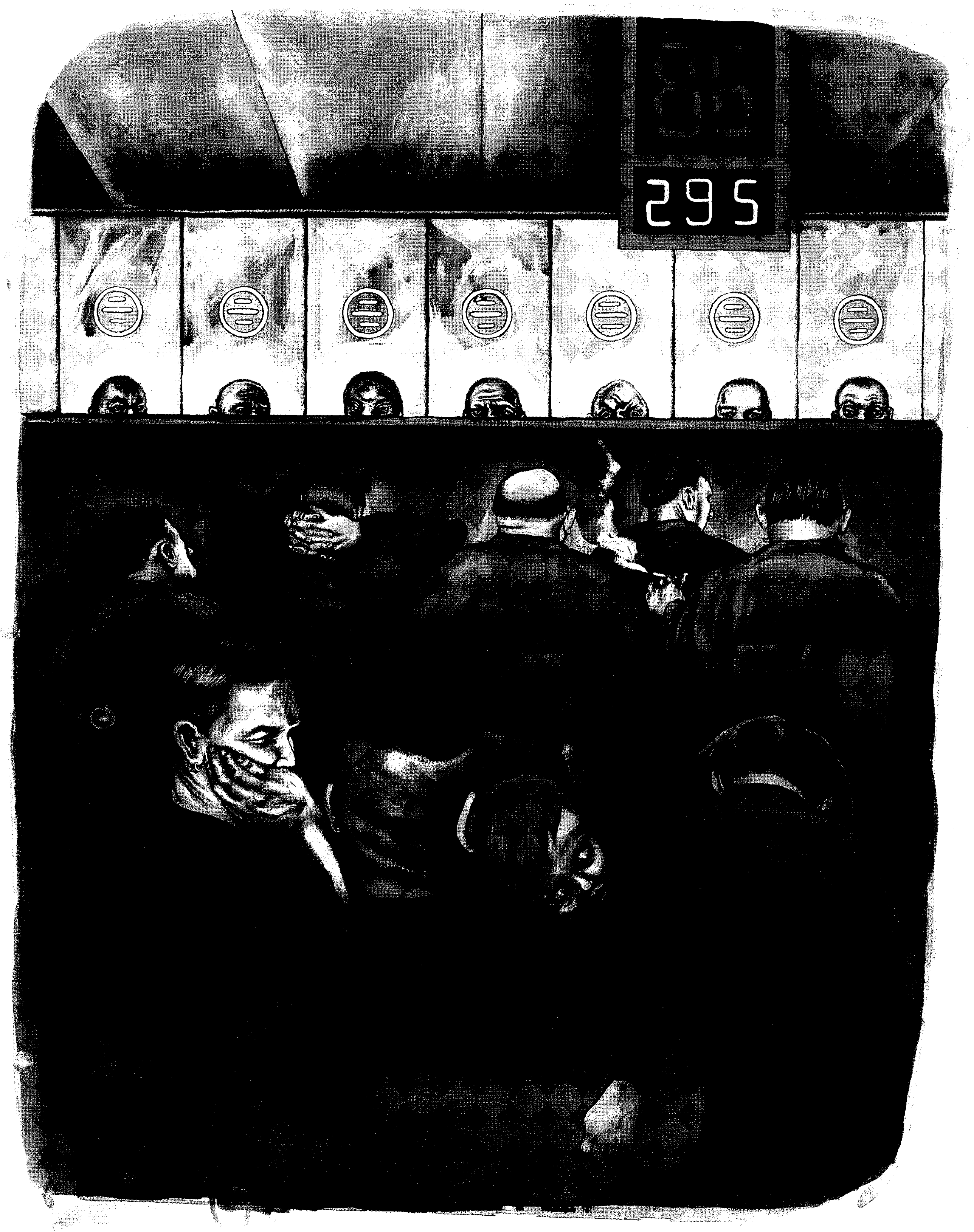




"She got batted." A father brings his daughter to the Social Services office. Her husband beat her up.



"You teach children not to talk to strangers, now you have to teach them not to talk to children."



"Going down the Social." Day after day, people line up at the Unemployment Office.

FICTION

LIVE WIRES

BY THOMAS BELLER

THE living room is quiet and serene, and Alex Fader takes a deep breath, as if the silence were a fragrance. Then the doorbell rings. He stands up and goes to answer it, wondering which guests have arrived first and feeling slightly annoyed at them for being on time. He makes strange and dramatic faces as he walks to the door; he has just shaved, and his skin has the texture of Plexiglas. He puts his hand on the cool doorknob, makes one last face, and catches a glimpse of himself in the hallway mirror. "Electrocution," he says, and flings the door open.

"Hi!" he nearly shrieks. "It's the Brienfields!"

"Hell-oo, Alexander!" cry the Brienfields and begin to pile into the apartment, crowded together under the weight of their winter coats and scarves and gloves, and a big shopping bag that contains the gifts. They see the empty living room and exclaim, "We're first!" with a hint of dismay.

Alex stares into the hearty, broad face of Mr. Brienfield. It is a face he has been greeting at these Hanukkah parties for the past fourteen years, but this time it seems a little different; it's as though the blood behind Mr. Brienfield's cheeks has thinned somewhat, while the brow that sits like a ridge above his eyes has thickened. At twenty-five, Alex has begun to see his mother's friends in a new light.

"Here, give me everything," he says. "I'm the coat-check." Years of practice have made Alex expert at getting people to part with their coats. He heads down the long, dark hallway in the direction of his mother's room, where the bed is the designated resting spot for coats.

"Mom!" he whispers at the closed door to the dressing room. "People are here!"

Hurrying back to the living room, he tries to think of something to say to the Brienfields. Their relation to him, like that of so many of the people who come to the party, is no longer definable—they're just there, a fixed part of the landscape of affiliations and friends of the Fader family, that sprawling brood of two.

The doorbell rings again, and then he hears the metallic click of the door opening. Panic touches him. What if it's Christine? he thinks, and then, What could Christine and the Brienfields possibly talk about? What in the world was I thinking when I invited her to this thing? He enters the foyer just as the Zuckermans come walking in. Some private moment of truth has been postponed, and Alex smiles like a slot-machine player who has just won small. He likes the Zuckermans, as a family and individually. The parents are handsome, successful, and reserved, and the kids are appealingly bashful.

"Come in, come in, come in!" says Alex, and he presses hands and kisses cheeks. A damp coldness still hangs on the Zuckermans' coats; they live just four blocks up Riverside Drive and have walked. "Give me all your stuff. My mother—"

But just then their faces turn together and brighten as if an angel had appeared. Alex turns and sees his mother entering the foyer in a white silk shirt and billowy black pants; her clothes undulate with each step, giving her the appearance not so much of walking as of floating. Her face has the special radiance and charm it takes on when she is anticipating the company of people she likes. The Brienfields and Zuckermans all move toward her instinctively, and Alex feels like an unmoving pier deserted by an outgoing tide.

His mother's translucent happiness provokes in him a mixture of elation and disgust. Watching her now, he's reminded of Anna Karenina. He has been reading the book for the first time since high school, and he has come to see more and more of his mother in the character of Anna. For one thing, the two women both have a glowing and unaffected manner that people are drawn to. That, and a maddening willfulness. Watching his mother now, Alex thinks, It's a bitch having a mother who belongs to the nineteenth century.

The Zuckermans descend on her with cries of joy, mouths pucker into kisses, and fingers clasp necks and caress cheeks. The doorbell rings again, and Alex flees down the dim hallway with another armload of coats. The annual Fader Hanukkah party is officially under way.

THE apartment has become crowded, and Alex moves from room to room, past people standing in little circles as if around campfires. He doesn't join in the conversations yet, but pauses next to each one just long enough to get its flavor. There is something odd and exhilarating about having so many lives suddenly packed within walls that are used to so few. When he was a boy, he would become delighted and intimidated by this transformation to such a degree that he had to take breaks in his mother's room, burying his face among the coats and breathing the musty personal scent of dried rain and old perfume. Now he continues to roam, taking in the bright faces. He doesn't live here anymore, but in a way he does. But he doesn't.

He finds his mother in the kitchen, slicing cherry tomatoes into a huge wooden salad bowl. He comes up next to her and watches as the sharp blade presses against the red flesh of each tomato, penetrates it after encountering some resistance, and then quickly moves through it, miraculously stopping just as it reaches her thumb.

"How's it going?" he says.

"Oh!" she says, startled. "Very good. I'm almost done."

"Everybody is asking for you," he says. "I keep hearing your name murmured here and there. It's like you're some greatly anticipated celebrity who hasn't arrived yet." He scowls as he says this, and his mother at once picks up his train of thought.

"Is Christine here yet?" she asks.

"No. Not yet. I don't know why I invited her. She's not even Jewish."

"Alexander! That doesn't matter. Many people come here who aren't Jewish."

It's true. This is a carefully secular Hanukkah party, as usual. But if it doesn't matter, he feels like saying, why do we bother to celebrate Hanukkah or Passover, or ever debate fasting on Yom

Kippur? But he knows the answer—or rather, he doesn't know the answer but somehow understands it.

"Well, I imagine she's probably late because she's terrified," he says. "I described the goings on here and I think I saw her cringe when I mentioned the singing."

"She'll enjoy it," says his mother, finishing with the last tomato. "She's open-minded."

Alex feels a stab of irritation at his mother for presuming things about his girlfriend, though what she says about Christine is probably right. The two have met several times, and although their styles could not be more different, they have seemed to connect. Alex has been intensely sensitive to the progress of these encounters. Christine is eight years older than he and occupies a strange place in the age spectrum, somewhere between himself and his mother. This worries him, for some reason.

"Come," says his mother. "Let's go out to the party." They step shyly into the foyer, pausing together to survey the scene. Then someone rushes up to Alex's mother with outstretched arms.

"Eve!" the woman cries. "Eve, hi. My God, I was wondering if I was going to see you at your own party!"

The woman is quite tall and thin, and her arms tighten around his mother like a lasso. She is one of those guests who show up each year whose names Alex can never remember. Last December, he discovered that she was a criminal judge, and as he watches her embrace his mother now he tries to contrast the image with one of her sitting on the bench, meting out stiff sentences.

Alex drifts away, noticing details in their apartment—a small violin case, dust-covered, that sits under the piano, an antique dagger hanging on the wall—that he never notices unless other people are present. It's as if each object projects light.

LATER on, with the party now in full swing, Alex is talking to one of his mother's old friends, Mrs. Talman. She has been dear to him ever since they first met, when he was about eleven and she pressed his head into her warm, plentiful, and highly fragrant breasts, in a polite but enveloping embrace. Now that he is grown-up, it is her head that seems about to be pressed into his chest, but he still feels a charge whenever they are together. She has glittering, dark eyes and tan, Mediterranean skin.

"Look at this handsome man," she says. "I hear that your girlfriend is going to be here. I can't wait to meet her."

"Why?" says Alex defensively.

"Because she's your girlfriend. I'm curious to see what kind of company you're keeping." Noticing the distressed look on his face, she adds, "The advance word has been very favorable."

"I'm not quite sure why I invited her. I think I figured that if I didn't, it would be like hiding something from her."

"Or from us."

"The things I've been hiding from my mother and her friends could fill a textbook."

"I don't know about that," says Mrs. Talman. "Children always overestimate the naïveté of their parents. When it comes down to it, our secrets are much more shocking than yours."

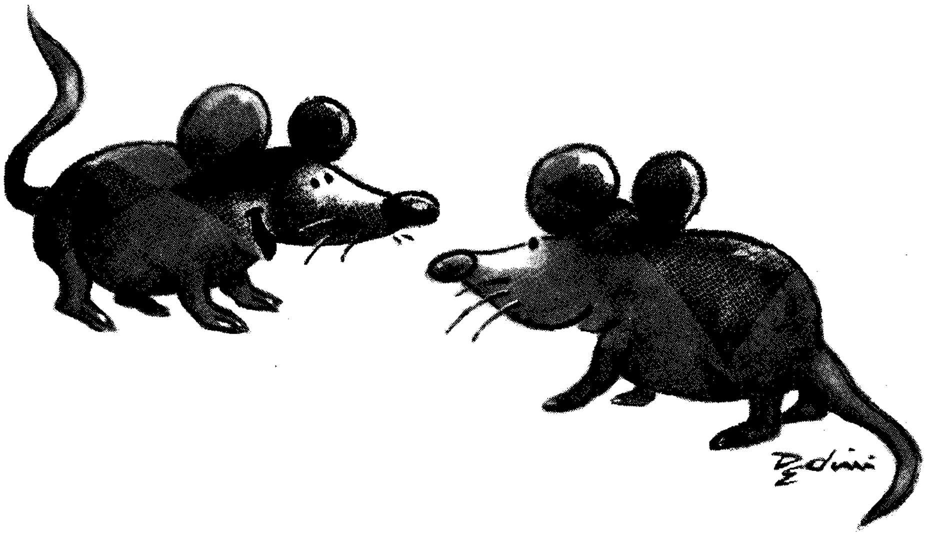
It is into this atmosphere that Alex's current girlfriend and passionate flame, Christine Derry, steps gingerly. Alarm overtakes him as he sees her standing in the vestibule, looking into the mass of chatting guests with the expression of someone on a high diving board peering at the pool below.

"Oh, my God," he says out loud, as though a fire had just broken out. He glances apologetically at Mrs. Talman and rushes toward Christine. All his rationalizations for her presence crumble in the face of disaster. What is it about her at this party that makes him so uneasy? He has been putting the question to himself, and his answers feel insufficient. He and she have come from different backgrounds—hers suburban and Midwestern—and now at this party his own background has been laid bare in all its foreignness. And then there is the difference in their ages, a detail that would be undetectable—she has youthful features and fine, unlined skin—except that her hair, which is cut short, to just below her ears, is unabashedly, almost defiantly, gray. None of this has proved to be an obstacle during their year together—in fact, these differences have made their closeness all the more exciting—but now it worries him.

As he approaches Christine, he feels a strong pulse of sensations he remembers from their first meeting. In their first conversation, at another party, she had gazed at him impassively with her wide gray-blue eyes, her center of gravity fixed with such calm precision that she hardly shifted her weight as they talked. A wave of anger had overtaken him. She seemed to be speaking to him from within a glass case, and he wanted nothing more than to shatter the glass. What he had ended up shattering was his plastic wineglass, which he had massaged with increasing force until it cracked and spilled his drink all over their shoes. It was during the ensuing laughter (hers) and stammered apologies (his) that they first connected.

His subsequent familiarity with the details of her life—her job at an advertising agency, her fussy insistence on drinking tea with enormous amounts of honey first thing in the morning, her lamentations about a jury summons—had slightly lessened his wish to shatter something, and with this change came an almost gallant protectiveness.

"You're late," he begins to say, but



"I want to have lots of children."

then catches himself. "It's our guest of honor!" he says instead.

"Hi," she says. "It's crowded."

He bends over and brings his face near hers. They've gotten into the habit of greeting each other by brushing the tips of their noses.

"I'd have been here sooner," she says, "but two pigeons landed on my windowsill and were going through this feverish courtship."

"I didn't know pigeons made out in December," Alex says. He is frowning. "Let me take your coat. It's my big job here, coat check. I've developed a talent for it."

"I don't know anyone," she says.

"What were you expecting? These are *friendly old Jewish people.*"

He doesn't know why he said the word "Jewish," except perhaps to get it out of the way. He has never had an affair with a Jewish girl. It hasn't been a conscious decision, but it has become a noticeable fact. "I'll introduce you to some people. I've been told that your arrival is greatly anticipated."

"By whom?"

"I don't know, exactly. I guess a lot of these people have known me since I was little, and they're curious to know what kind of company I'm keeping."

"They'll be horrified to know you're dating an old hag."

As she says this she slips out of her coat. It is a big gray woolen thing, and her body emerges from it like the tender insides of an enormous nut. Her dress is pink, her arms bare. She looks like candy, he thinks.

"I'll be right back," he says.

He hurries down the hallway with her coat, throws it on the bed, and is about to hurry back when the bed catches his eye. It is piled high with voluptuous winter coats, and a tremendous urge to take a swan dive into the pile comes over him. He pauses, debating it, and then remembers that his last such dive there, at age thirteen, had produced a sharp cracking sound, after which there was always a sag in one part of the bed. Anyway, he's a grownup now.

WHEN Alex returns to the foyer Christine is gone. A quick scan locates her at the other side of the room, with a woman named Julia. She is a nice lady who has been coming to the Hanukkah party year after year. She is one of several women who show up alone at these parties; they occupy an age somewhere between the mid-forties and mid-sixties, and have an upbeat but somewhat beleaguered quality. Alex has always looked at them with a mixture of curiosity and trepidation, the way someone waiting to go into a haunted house looks at the people just emerging. These are women—there are a few men who come alone, too, but they are different—who have wound their way through love and marriage and children and divorce, and even death, and now, he sees, find themselves blinking outside in the daylight, alone. It's strange to think that this is a group that his mother belongs to, as well, though somehow she doesn't have that blinking quality.

Alex arrives in time to hear Julia say to Christine, "Really. I'm serious. Like in those trashy romance novels, you know, when they describe the heroine's skin—you know: smooth, white, porcelain, fair, twenty adjectives in a row—they're describing your skin. Really. I know. I wrote one."

"That's nice of you," said Christine. "I don't think I believe you, though."

Alex flashes to an image of Christine stepping into their bed with several layers of expensive and mysterious creams and mists massaged into her face. The process, which they jokingly refer to as "the beauty ritual," is so elaborate that it is a struggle for Alex to stay awake through it, and often he is awakened by Christine's body, in her pink pajamas, sliding into bed next to him.

"Hello, Alex," says Julia distractedly. "I was just telling your friend that she has exactly the kind of—"

"She thinks I look like one of those women in trashy books who are innocent and pure and end up sleeping with terrible men," says Christine.

"That's not quite how I put it," says Julia. She is about to elaborate when a

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GHOST RIDERS OF THE MOON

Today I would leave it just as it is.
The pocket comb—"dirty as a comb," the French say,
yet not so dirty, surely not in the spiritual sense
some intuit; the razor, lying at an angle
to the erect toothbrush, like an alligator stalking
a *bayadère;* the singular effect of all things
being themselves, that is, stark mad

with no apologies to the world or the ether,
and then the crumbling realization that a halt
has been called. That the stair treads
conspired in it. That the boiling oil
hunched above the rim of its vessel, and just sat there.
That there were no apologies to be made, ever
again, no alibis for the articles returned to the store,
just a standoff, placid, eternal. And one can admire
again the coatings of things, without prejudice
or innuendo, and the kernels be discreetly
disposed of—well, spat out. Such

objects as my endurance picks out
like a searchlight have gone the extra mile
too, like schoolchildren, and are seated now
in attentive rows, waiting trimly for these words to flood
distraught corners of silences. We collected
them after all for their unique
indifference to each other and to the circus
that houses us all, and for their collectibility—
that, and their tendency to fall apart.

—JOHN ASHBERY

shushing sound sweeps through the room and attention moves to the baby grand piano in one corner of the room, behind which stands his mother.

"Everybody," she says, "it's time for the singing. Those who know how it goes, and there should be many of you by now, please sing along, and those who are new, there are sheets being passed around."

Guests gather from all parts of the apartment, crowding into the living room bearing chairs and drinks, and now fumbling with the song sheets.

Alex looks at Christine with an apologetic expression. "Does this seem really weird?" he says.

"No," she says. "It seems nice."

Her answer doesn't quell his anxiety, and he is called over to the piano. It is time for the lighting of the candles. People sit in chairs pressed up close to one another, making an unruly semicircle around the piano. Four unfortunate guests are perched on the remains of the couch, which is elegant in its appearance, a few rips aside, but otherwise completely ruined. Anyone sitting down on it, Alex knows, is sucked down into a swirl of cushions and springs, and practically lowered to the floor. He stares at two couples lined up there: each person is trying to act as if the awkward position they've been placed in—knees up near their armpits—is not unusual. He vows not to make a nervous joke about the couch. He has made a joke about it every year for as long as he can remember. Then, with the oily loquaciousness of a lounge-act m.c., he murmurs, "Um, if anyone is missing a friend, you might want to check the couch. It's a lovely couch but its relation to furniture is similar to the Venus flytrap's relation to flowers."

Then the matches are handed to him. Silence. A little red-tipped twig in his fingers. The thunderous crack of the tip against the brown flint of the matchbook. Success, on the very first try. And then the horrible, aching, off-key sound of his own voice half chanting, half singing, as he lights the middle candle and then passes its flame from candle to candle. It is the last night of Hanukkah, so all eight candles have to be lit, and he tries to get each wick going as soon as possible. "*Baruch ata adonai eloheinu melech haolam*," he croaks. "*Asher kidshanu bemitzvotav . . .*" He manages to sing with a moderate amount of vigor, telling himself that his religion seems to stipulate that such songs be sung in a discordant wavering voice, with hardly any sense of rhythm.

When it is over he joins his mother on the piano bench, and the room stumbles its way through the first song, his mother almost the only one to sing the words in a clear, melodic voice. At the end Alex feels a huge sense of relief mingled with regret. Everyone, he has noticed, feels uncomfortable with the singing until the last note has begun to fade, at which point everyone pretends to have enjoyed it all. It's Hanukkah. The pile of gifts under the menorah looms large, and appetizing smells waft in from the kitchen.

"Very good!" his mother calls out when the last mooing, mumbling words have died away. "Let's try that one again!"

Alex feels the room's collective heart sink, and he bends his head so as not to have to look at anyone. The guests launch into it again, and this time a few more voices join in: "*Maoz Tsur yeshuati* . . ." When it's over, his mother plays another, slightly more lively song. And then finally a last, peppy one.

"This one is called 'Sevivon,' " she says, "and it's about a little dreidel which is very mischievous and runs through the woods and the streams and goes anywhere it wants." The words "woods and streams" seem almost criminal to Alex. They belong to a pre-ironic language that the world has long since cast aside. His mother starts to play. He stares at her fingers on the white and black keys. They aren't the world's most elegant fingers, yet they exude the maddening kind of optimism possessed by people who like to plant gardens. The lyrics of this last song are repetitive, and more and more people gradually join in the singing. His mother quickens the pace, and without stopping spins the song into a second go-around. For a moment Alex lets his eyes flick upward. He sees a tableau of faces, some sombre, some cheerful, some staring with concentration down at individual sheets of paper while they sing, some singing heartily to the ceiling, some outright faking it. He half glimpses Christine, sitting in one corner, and can't tell if her lips are moving.

All the faces are bathed in a warm light from the lamps around the room; some of the silk lampshades, he knows, are ripped on the inside, and fringes of silk hang down like vines; others are so old that they cast a yellow glow, like a candle's. The moment seems to contain everything about life that is attractive and perfect and nourishing and also everything that makes one want to flee and hide under a rock and hope that someone someday might find a cure for— For the awkward, transparent fragility of people such as these.

It is over. Gifts are distributed—a surfeit of scarves for the men, more personal things for the women—and then everyone begins to file into the study for dinner, a buffet. Alex finds Christine talking to Mrs. Zuckerman. He catches Christine's eye but then decides to leave her alone. She and Mrs. Zuckerman seem relaxed together. A sense of lightness comes over him, now that the main event is over. Finally relinquishing her duties, his mother is roaming around, talking to people, and Alex keeps shifting his gaze from Christine to his mother and back. They're like two live wires, separate yet each connected to him. He is aware of an impulse to keep them apart, but doesn't know what it means.

The party starts to wind down—a gradual thinning and then a sudden rush. Then it is done. The last people crowd down the hallway in a group, holding their coats and gifts. There is an awkward period in the hall, while the elevator climbs and slows, and everyone's attention turns to the churning, wheezing sounds it makes as it prepares to stop. They huddle in, offer a last, frantic flurry of waves and goodbyes as if they were on the deck of a departing ship, and the door closes.

Alex and his mother and Christine go back into the apartment, which is awash in ribbons and colored paper and scattered chairs and plates and half-emptied wineglasses with traces of lipstick around the edges. This moment, too, has duplicated itself year after year, though now there is a variation—the cast has grown to three.

Alex realizes that the most difficult part of the evening is at hand. It is a foregone conclusion that he's going home with Christine, but how he is going to negotiate the transition is suddenly a mystery.

"Oh my!" says his mother, exultant with relief. "That was one of the best ones." Then she turns to Christine. "Thank you so much for coming."

"Why are you thanking me? I should

thank you. It was a really nice party. I've never been to a Hanukkah party before. It was amazingly friendly."

Once again, her calm assurance—the first thing he had noticed about her—strikes Alex. She is performing a social function with this sort of talk, but there is something about her, an openness, that takes it somewhere else. Her cheeks are full of color, and her eyes seem unusually bright.

"Shall we open the presents?" says his mother.

Alex stands still. The business of opening presents with his mother is so personal that he can't imagine this third party taking part. The two women look at him, and he is reminded of an unpleasant experience he had not long ago with his incoherent Aunt Louise, his father's sister, who lives in a nursing home in New Jersey. She has Alzheimer's. During the visit, he had waved a picture of Christine in front of her face and said, "This is my girlfriend. My *girlfriend*. What do you think? Not bad, huh?"

Aunt Louise rarely said anything, so Alex was in the habit of keeping up both sides of the conversation in her presence. But this time she swerved briefly back into the cantankerous and acerbic woman she had been for so many years, and her face took on an alarmed and vaguely contemptuous expression. "Eve," she said. "It's Eve."

"No, no," said Alex, horrified. "It's my—" but his aunt's eyes removed themselves again and he was left staring at the photograph, struck by the idea that he had managed to find a woman who resembled his mother when she was younger. He saw it quite suddenly: the same broad, smooth forehead, the pencil-thin eyebrows, the elegant nose. But most of all the mouth—that half smile that was an expression neither of happiness nor sadness, coldness nor affection, but of a private and elusive pleasure.

Now, staring back at these two faces, he feels unsure of how best to prevent the three of them opening gifts together. Christine would tear hers open, and his mother would unpeel each piece of tape, to preserve the wrapping, and he would sit in the middle feeling embarrassed.

"I'll do the dishes," he suddenly offers. "There are all these dishes and I can't leave you with them. It's not fair. Let's just clean up first." For the first time in his life he is glad that his mother doesn't own a dishwasher.

In moments, he is in his official dish-washing posture—his forehead pressed to the cabinet above the sink while his hands and arms work—and he enters a dish-washing trance. Christine and his mother move about the apartment, gathering dishes and glasses and silver and bringing them to him. Nearly an hour has passed before the last spoon has been rinsed and dried. Christine and his mother are sitting at the kitchen table, talking, their faces pleasant and relaxed.

"Well," Alex says finally. "I guess that's that."

"All right," says his mother. The air is filled with departure. She smiles brightly, but Alex feels there's something slightly forced about it. The gifts still lie unopened.

"I'll get our coats," he says and goes to retrieve them.

As he and Christine are leaving, Alex finds that the living room looks like a stage set after the play is over and the actors have all gone home. Chairs stand at odd angles to one another, and remnants of the party are scattered about. The menorah, which had presided grandly over the event, now sits quietly, its eight candles burnt down. The neat pile of unopened gifts that lies at its base—his gifts for his mother, hers for him, and those brought by the guests—seems like an oversight. The idea of his mother left alone on this stage is suddenly excruciating to him, and his departing manner is almost abrupt.

"All right, that was great," he says. "I'll call you tomorrow. We'll do the presents soon."

"Thank you so much, Eve," says Christine, and the sound of his mother's name on her lips surprises him. The two women embrace warmly, pausing in each other's arms almost as if in commiseration. He is entirely outside of this moment, and he peers at them curiously, wondering what is happening. They have more in common with each other than either has with him. Two women and a bystander. Then he bends to kiss his mother's warm cheek.

Out in the hall, a vague dizziness overtakes him as the dial beside the elevator slowly turns toward the number of their floor. The door opens. He and Christine step in. It closes behind them, his mother's face momentarily visible through the small rectangular window in the elevator door.

"Bye!" calls Christine.

The elevator starts down. "Goodbye," comes the reply, but his mother's face has disappeared.

IT is a cold, clear winter night, and the streets are hard, windswept, and empty. Alex and Christine walk hand in hand toward West End Avenue, the sound of their shoes echoing against the pavement.

"What did you think?" Alex says after a minute.

"It was nice," Christine says. They walk in silence for a few more steps. "There was something heartwarming about it. And sort of heartrending, too, the way all those people seemed so friendly and kind, and your mother being so enthusiastic. It's almost enough to make you optimistic about people."

"Almost," says Alex.

She says nothing more, and for a moment he hates her.

They wait on the deserted corner until an empty taxi screeches to a stop in front of them. They clamber in and head downtown toward Christine's apartment. It is an old taxi, with ancient shocks, and windows that don't quite close. The smell is pleasant, though: old leather and some previous passenger's perfume. Alex and Christine huddle against each other in the back seat.

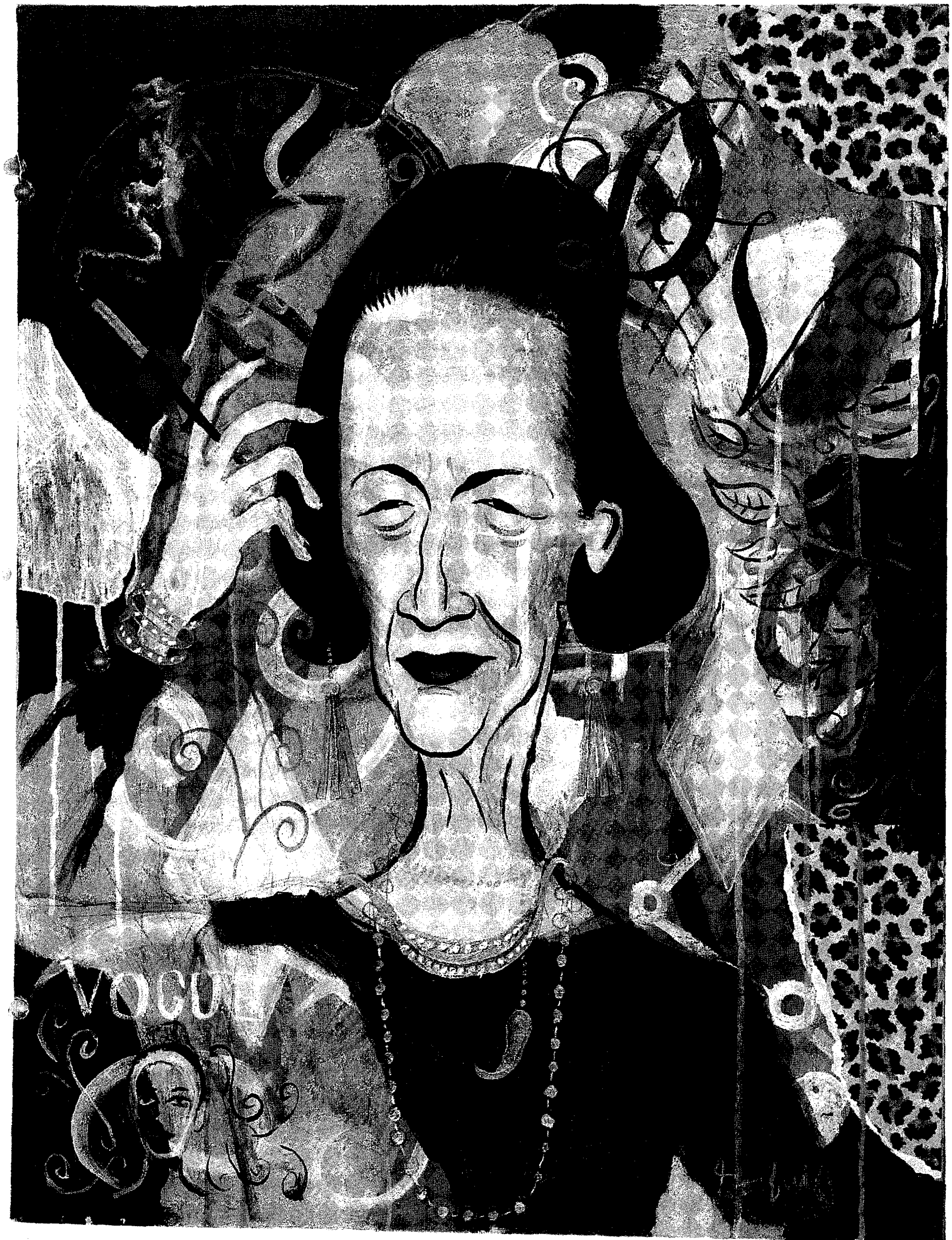
"Alex?" she says at one point.

"Yeah?" he replies, but she doesn't say anything else.

The cold wind whistles through the doors. Every block or so they hit a bump and the cab rises off the ground as though it had just flown over the crest of a hill. The glow of each passing street light falls across Christine's face and then recedes. Alex reflects on the impossibility of his relationship with her—the doom and despair that await him, and the heartbreak. He misses the familiar warmth and security of the apartment he has just left. Yet his departure was inevitable—a thrilling turn of events. He holds Christine tight as they go over a bump. Up goes the taxi in a smooth, effortless glide, and a tiny smile comes over Alex's face as they hang in midair. ♦

ARTIST'S EASEL · BY JOSH GOSFIELD

DIANA VREELAND

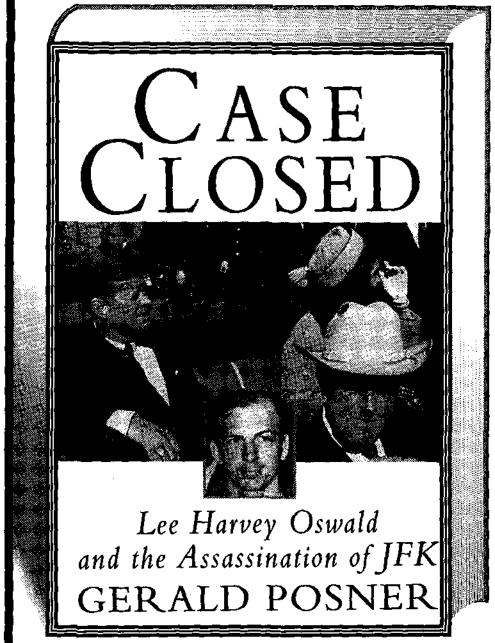


"Diana Vreeland: Immoderate Style" opens on December 9th at the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

ONE MAN. ONE GUN. ONE INESCAPABLE CONCLUSION.

CASE CLOSED

BY GERALD POSNER



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RANDOM HOUSE

THE CRITICS

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

FUZZY

BY DANIEL MENAKER

LATELY, the twin systems of childhood and parenthood appear to have gone "fuzzy"—to use the word that scientists have given to the new kind of computer logic which will ultimately make the old binary, on-off functioning look like counting on your fingers. Fuzzy not in the sense of warm and comforting but in the sense of hard to define, confoundingly nuanced. The primary responsibilities of parenthood and the needs of children may not have changed very much, but the choices involved in rearing (and being) children have proliferated so rapidly as to constitute an explosion, especially in the last decade. The variables no longer come in black-or-white and single file, as they used to, or used to *seem* to—TV or no TV, public school or private, makeup or no makeup, short hair or long—but like a cloud of gnats. Educational "options" multiply; the wave of channels to surf grows higher and higher; boys wear earrings and girls wear work boots; there are four or five kinds of Cheerios.

PHILIP STANTON

This postmodern multiplicity obtains in spades in the world of children's reading. To a middle-aged man like me—one who grew up on Milne and the Hardy Boys—to enter the children's section of a book superstore is to stand in bewilderment, as a Tasaday would in a Food Emporium. The recent recession has caused some cutbacks in children's publishing (and, according to Jean Feiwel, editor-in-chief of the Scholastic Book Group, it may also cause a reduction in the fifteen-to-twenty-dollar price tags for ten-to-twenty-page picture books—at last). Still, some five thousand children's books have been published in this country in 1993, and if their sheer numerousness isn't overwhelming, what's in them sometimes is.

Rodman Philbrick's **Freak the Mighty**, a young-adult book published this fall by Scholastic's new Blue Sky imprint ($13.95), concerns the friendship between Maxwell Kane—a big, learning-disabled eighth grader living with his grandparents because his father is in prison for having killed his mother—and Kevin, a crippled genius who moves in down the block with his single mom. Together, Max and Kevin form a symbiotic entity of brawn and brains called Freak the Mighty, and they earn a place for themselves, however grotesque, among their peers. Then Max's father gets out of jail—he puts one over on the parole board—and abducts his son. Kevin comes to Max's rescue and saves his life, and during the climactic battle Max remembers watching as his father choked his mother to death when he was four years old. Kevin dies not long afterward—it turns out that his condition was terminal all along and he knew it—but the friendship has served to give Max new life.

"Freak the Mighty" is dedicated to "the real Kevin," so real life—and real difficulties—may lie at its heart. But I could detect the beat of that heart faintly at best, what with all the agendas that seem to surround it: adolescent self-loathing and self-consciousness, physical handicaps, emotional disturbance, learning problems, single parenthood, foster parenthood, childhood trauma, "recovered" memory, violence. So many topical themes pop up that they start fighting among themselves for the limelight and end up in a heap on the floor. The book is like a circus car, packed with an eventually comical number of current psychological and moral issues. When you factor in the relentlessly noir background and Max's sarcastic narrative voice, you have a bizarre artifact indeed—one whose concluding ray of hope may not be

THE HISTORY OF HELL
ALICE K. TURNER

"A fascinating survey...Turner's book reveals a sophisticated mastery of theology and psychology as well as art history and comparative religion."
—Jonathan Kirsch, *The Los Angeles Times*

"An arresting journey through the netherworld."
—*Publishers Weekly*

"An informed yet breezy look at that unbreeziest of places... Turner's primer is as efficiently organized as Dante's circles."
—*Village Voice Literary Supplement*

In this lively, copiously illustrated history, Alice Turner shows us how centuries of poets and painters, religious leaders and ordinary people have visualized Hell. From *Gilgamesh* to Samuel Beckett, *The Odyssey* to Freud, this spirited survey shows us precisely how our ideas of Hell have changed and why.

HARCOURT BRACE

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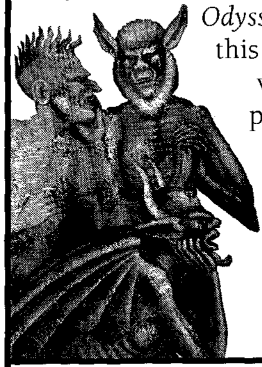

bright enough to penetrate the cloud of gloom and tribulation that preceded it.

Judy Blume's **Here's to You, Rachel Robinson**, another young-adult book (Orchard; $14.95), also trades in issues and controversies, but here they are more quotidian and less gothically rendered. Blume has blazed one of the widest trails in candid "problem" fiction for young people, of course, and this book is a sequel to her wildly popular "Just as Long as We're Together." It features the same trio of teen-age friends—Alison, Stephanie, and the titular Rachel—and its central agon concerns thirteen-year-old Rachel's battles with her older brother Charles, who is living at home after being kicked out of boarding school. Along the way toward the inevitable dawn of reconciliation, the reader locks horns with bruxism, adoption, *foreign* adoption, possibly psychosomatic motion sickness, gender-role confusion, sibling rivalry, cystic acne, ethnic identity, single parenthood, and adultery. It all begins to look a little like wallpaper as it unrolls before us. But Judy Blume writes with humor and she knows how to work by implication, and her narrator, for all her intensity, recounts her trials in an appealing voice. So this is quite a good book on its own psychologistic terms, but it seems a bit too aware of what it's up to, and in that way, like "Freak the Mighty," it exemplifies the salient and not always wonderful trend in children's-book publishing today.

In fact, as a recent article in *Newsweek* pointed out, the entire industry of children's books, including books for younger children, bristles with topicality. In the *Publishers Weekly* fall listing of children's books the titles alone sometimes grind axes, air conflicts, or pipe multicultural and politically correct melodies: "Proudly Red and Black," "Still a Nation of Immigrants," "Peace Is a Circle of Love," "I'm New Here," "The Birth Order Blues," "Why Save the Rain Forest?"

Why not "Bambi and Dumbo Get Married: An Interspecies Romance," "Hitler Had Feelings, Too," "This Land Is Arachnids' Land," "Free to Be Bipolar"? The whole climate is enough to make a person want to throw up his hands and retreat into his own arbitrary and irresponsible sense of *fun*. If the person was going to make a list of his own

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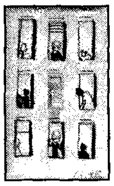

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favorite children's books of the year, that is.

BOOKS FOR YOUNGER KIDS (THREE OR FOUR TO NINE OR TEN)

Doctor Knickerbocker and Other Rhymes, selected by David Booth and illustrated by Maryann Kovalski (Ticknor & Fields; $16.95). There's nothing like a little silliness to blow the issues out of your system. This is a tidy, perhaps Opie-inspired compendium of nonsense verse, insult doggerel, counting chants, and daffy songs, with Gorey-like pen-and-ink drawings of boys and girls running and jumping anarchically through its pages. Sometimes the children recite hand-lettered rhymes in cartoon balloons, sometimes the verse is in type and illustrated, sometimes a staid portrait speaks up. A good one, new to me: "Vegetable Love, / Do you carrot all for me? / My heart beets for you. / With your turnip nose / And your radish face, / You are a peach. / If we cantaloupe, / Lettuce marry; / Weed make a swell pear."

I Spy Mystery: A Book of Picture Riddles, photographs by Walter Wick, riddles by Jean Marzollo (Scholastic; $12.95). A handsome enhancement of the concept behind "Where's Waldo?" and earlier seek-and-find books. Rhymed riddles under two-page photographs tell a reader what to look for among the welter of objects shown. Each photograph differs in setting and atmosphere from the last: in one, a pretty array of buttons, bracelets, and beads lies on a pure-white background; in another, seashells and other marine objects are embedded in sand.

Cinderella, by William Wegman, with Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman (Hyperion; $16.95). From overexposure to Wegman and his Weimaraners, I wasn't going to mention this campy version of the fairy tale, featuring photographs of two of the dogs, Battina and Fay, dressed up and posed as Cinderella, her wicked stepmother, the handsome prince, and so on, but then my seven-year-old daughter, new to Wegmanism and all it doesn't stand for, laughed so hard when I read it to her that I changed my mind. The text accompanying the surreal, anthropomorphic pictures has a nice, fey humor—"Did you see the way he looked at me?" one of the ugly stepsisters says, thinking wishfully about the prince; "What a wolf!"—and some of the photographs are undeniably wonderful (the wedding portrait at the end, in particular). But why, as Elizabeth wanted to know, do the canines in some of the pictures have human hands and feet?

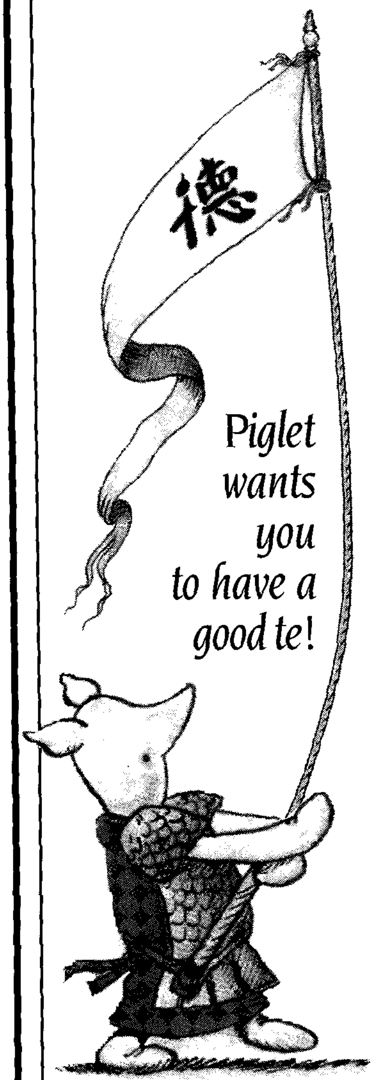
O Canada, by Ted Harrison (Ticknor & Fields; $14.95). This quick tour of our NAFTA neighbor proceeds east to west—Newfoundland to B.C.—and then north, to the Yukon and Northwest Territories. The full-page illustrations are simple and colorful, and the text—which shows a strong preference for the nonpopulous areas of this vast land—includes just the kind of amazing natural fact that most impresses children and me: "The bay [of Fundy] is so long and narrow that the force of the ocean creates tides fifty-two feet high . . . that rush in as fast as a person can walk."

When I Was Little: A Four-Year-Old's Memoir of Her Youth, by Jamie Lee Curtis, illustrated by Laura Cornell (HarperCollins; $14). Yes, *the* Jamie Lee Curtis. A brief and quite charming text in which a little girl looks back on babyhood and concludes that the most important difference between her life now and her life way back then is self-awareness. The pictures are sketchy but cheerful before-and-after cartoons.

A Color Sampler, by Kathleen Westray (Ticknor & Fields; $14.95). A superb, ultra-handsome introduction to colors and color theory, with illustrations based on classic patchwork-quilt patterns.

Hunting the White Cow, by Tres Seymour, illustrated by Wendy Anderson Halperin (Orchard; $15.95). A young girl recounts the futile efforts by her father and other men to recapture a white cow that used to belong to her family and has now gone wild "somewhere north of Priceville." As the narrative progresses, the grownups accumulate sticktights, mud, sore knees, soaked clothes, and growing respect in their pursuit of the fugitive. At the end, the girl, who has been left out of the hunt each time, goes off to search for the cow by herself. She finds her, and, though she loses her again, they come to an understanding of sorts. An *excellent* picture book, with quiet humor and authority in the text, and subtle illustrations.

Did You Say Ghosts?, by Richard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Michelson, illustrated by Leonard Baskin (Macmillan; $14.95). An illustrated poem, in which each verse introduces a frightening creature that drives away but equals or surpasses in fright quotient the one that came before:

> GARGOYLES!
> DID YOU SAY GARGOYLES?
>
> Covered head to toe with boils,
> warts, and scaly snakeskin coils,
>
> gargoyles wait till you're alone
> and then they spring to life full grown.
> But any gorgon, it's well known,
> can turn a gargoyle into stone.
>
> GORGONS!
> DID YOU SAY GORGONS?

The Revenge of Ishtar, retold and illustrated by Ludmila Zeman (Tundra; $19.95). A powerful version of part of the Gilgamesh epic, reminiscent in textual and pictorial style of "D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths." Here the great Mesopotamian king and his friend Enkidu slay the monster Humbaba, and Gilgamesh earns for his hard work the affections of the goddess Ishtar. When he rejects her, he gets into big trouble. A fairly neatly severed head or two, blood on the ground, terrible monsters—a stirring and sad tale, not for the easily freak-outable.

The Slumber Party, by Margaret Wild, illustrated by David Cox (Ticknor & Fields; $13.95). The drawing style is energetic—all-purpose cartoony-looking—and the text cleverly exposes the oxymoron that lurks in the title. Jane invites seven friends for a birthday sleepover, and each arrives carrying his or her own psychological and literal baggage. The ensuing farce includes a lost birthday-present mouse, obsessive toothbrushing, near hypothermia, and minimal Zs, and it all proceeds in a gratifyingly logical way.

My New York, by Kathy Jakobsen (Little, Brown; $15.95). Becky, who has moved to New York from the Midwest, writes a letter to her friend Martin back home, describing what the city is like. The words run below large, vibrant, folk-artistic illustrations, including a couple of foldouts. The author has chosen ordinary and extraordinary sites to show and tell about—the subway, Chinatown, the Empire State Building—and the book would make a perfect present for the younger members of any family planning to visit or live here.

One Small Square, by Donald M. Silver, illustrated by Patricia J. Wynne (Freeman; $14.95 per volume), is a series of nature books, for seven-to-twelve-year-olds, depicting and explaining organisms and ecosystems found in different environments. I've seen the two that are in print so far, "Seashore" and "Backyard." Read them the old-fashioned way, or browse among the clear and colorful illustrations and the floating paragraphs that explain them. These books have a central text but satisfy more spatial appetites with varying page layouts, suggested experiments (tide charts and scientific beachcombing), and peripheral fact bytes. (Humpback whales spout straight up, sperm whales at a jaunty forty-five degrees.)

If you want the full-blown spatial treatment, turn to **Stephen Biesty's Cross-Sections: Man-of-War**, illustrated by Stephen Biesty and written by Richard Platt (Dorling Kindersley; $16.95). Dorling Kindersley does striking big-drawings-against-white-space books, and Biesty's earlier "Incredible Cross-Sections" was a magnificent example. This one is an informative, funny, teeming presentation of the form and functions of an eighteenth-century warship, based on Admiral Nelson's H.M.S. Victory. You learn something everywhere you look: a carpenter's walk around the ship just below the waterline allowed leaks to be detected, and some of the "officer's servants," age eight, were so small they had to be lifted into their hammocks to sleep.

Speaking of the sea, I notice that I've begun drifting toward books for older kids, but before I come about and take a regrettably short tack home, here are five more noteworthy picture books: **The Great Art Adventure**, by Bob Knox (Rizzoli; $15.95), in which Dave and Jane visit a wacky museum and see themselves and their activities depicted in many different kinds of art from many different eras; **Baba Yaga**, by K[illegible]a Arnold (North-South Books; $14.95), presenting the Russian witch at her child-eating worst, with arresting woodcutlike illustrations; **Father, May I Come?**, by Peter Spier (Doubleday; $13.55), about old-time and newfangled sea-rescue techniques; **Fox Song**, by Joseph Bruchac, illustrated by Paul Morin (Philomel; $14.95), which tells the story of a young Abenaki girl as she tries to ac-

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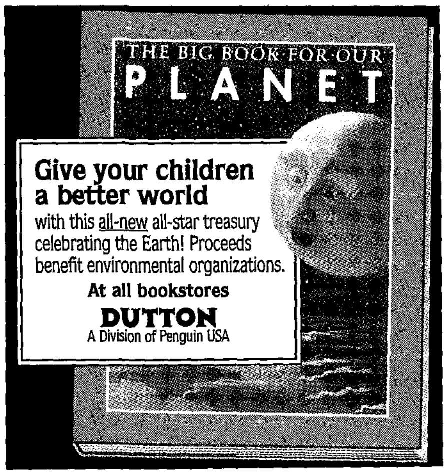
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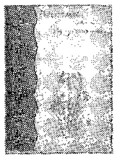

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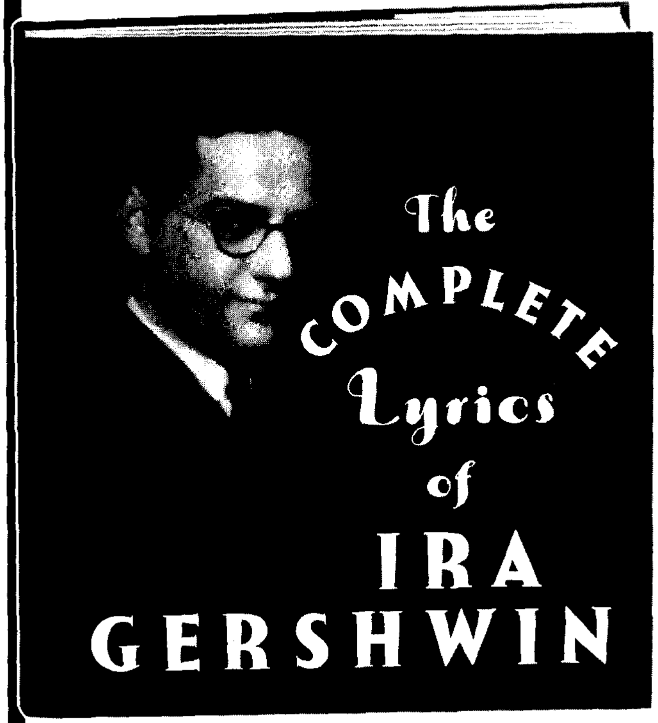
cept her grandmother's death (the drawings are rich and warm, and here multiculturalism finds a good home, inasmuch as the grandmother's teachings about the old tribal beliefs and customs have universal and timeless applications); and **Festival in My Heart: Poems by Japanese Children**, selected and translated by Bruno Navasky, with seventy-seven images by various Japanese artists (Abrams; $29.95)—an enchanting anthology.

BOOKS FOR OLDER KIDS (NINE OR TEN AND UP)

THE most outstanding feature of young-adult fiction, from a parental point of view, may be that the members of its intended audience can read it for themselves. I'll mention a few examples at the end of this list, which consists mainly of nonfiction books, but generally, like adolescence itself, the genre strikes me as more necessary than lovable. The one exception that I've run across is the very successful Redwall series, by the British writer and performer Brian Jacques, which recounts on a panoramic scale the subtle strategies of and epic conflicts between brave and virtuous woodland creatures and their dastardly enemies—stoats, rats, etc. Female animals play important, sometimes dominant roles in both the evildoing and the heroics, and the plots involve just enough intricacy to prepare fourth to eighth graders for the more complex narratives that one hopes they will somehow find time to sandwich between receiving and sending out salacious E-mail in high school. This cycle creates an entire topographical and moral world, and most adults will find it tolerable—and sometimes enjoyable and even moving—to read these books aloud with children. There are five volumes available now; a sixth will be available in February and is titled **Martin the Warrior**, about a mighty mouse; the publisher is Philomel ($16.95).

Champions, by Bill Littlefield, with paintings by Bernie Fuchs (Little, Brown; $21.95). Ten brief essays about world-class athletes by NPR's sports commentator Littlefield, with luminous, somewhat impressionistic illustrations by *Sports Illustrated's* Fuchs. Women and men, blacks and whites, pros and amateurs, these champions (Satchel Paige,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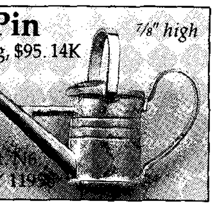
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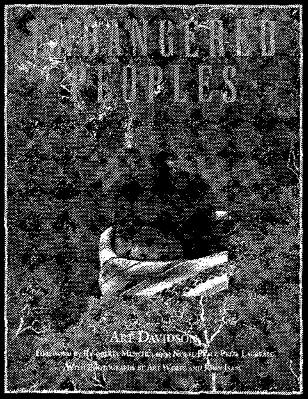

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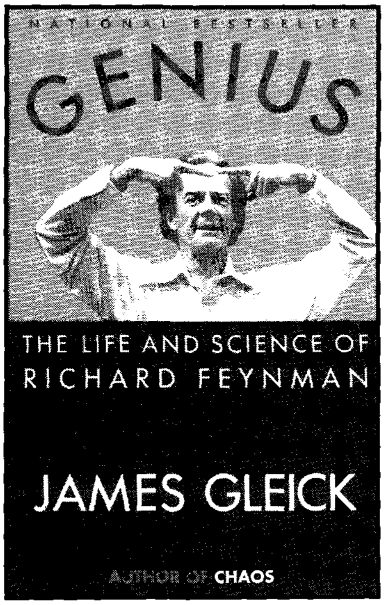

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Diana Golden, Pelé, Julie Krone, etc.) all embody something more than athletic excellence. They overcame prejudice or gave time and money to charitable causes or faced down physical disabilities—Diana Golden is the greatest one-legged skier alive—and the book emphasizes these extra dimensions.

Lock & Key, by Stephen Tchudi, with thirty-seven black-and-white photographs and five drawings (Scribners; $14.95). Children have always liked security measures—maybe because they live so much of their lives under figurative or actual constraints. Here, in clear prose and with helpful illustrations, is a history and an explanation of locksmithing, from "locking" a cave with a huge stone to opening a door with an electronic device that recognizes the unique pattern of blood vessels in the back of your eyes. Mr. Tchudi has even done a chapter on metaphors derived from his subject matter.

First Impressions: Paul Gauguin, by Howard Greenfeld, with fifty-four illustrations, including thirty-four color plates (Abrams; $19.95). The latest book in the series that has given us such distinguished volumes as Joseph Kastner on John James Audubon, this is a sober, balanced biography and critical assessment of a troubled and troublesome genius—but not too sober to forgo mentioning that on his first trip to Tahiti the artist took along, among other things, a French horn and a shotgun, the latter to kill the wild game he hoped to attract by playing the former. Best for junior-high or high-school kids with real interest in art.

Those Who Love the Game: Glenn "Doc" Rivers on Life in the NBA and Elsewhere, by Rivers and Bruce Brooks, with eleven black-and-white photographs (Holt; $15.95). The most intelligent and articulate of the Knicks (with Anthony Mason, who shaves logos into his hairline, running a close second) expatiates on basketball, race, leadership, his N.B.A. confrères, competition, and his father, among other topics raised in this loose-jointed biography/conversation, which will be available in January. It's better than most such efforts, and the Knicks' young faithful—more zealous and sanguine than ever this year, in Michael's absence—will find that it enriches their fandom considerably.

From Sea to Shining Sea: A Trea-

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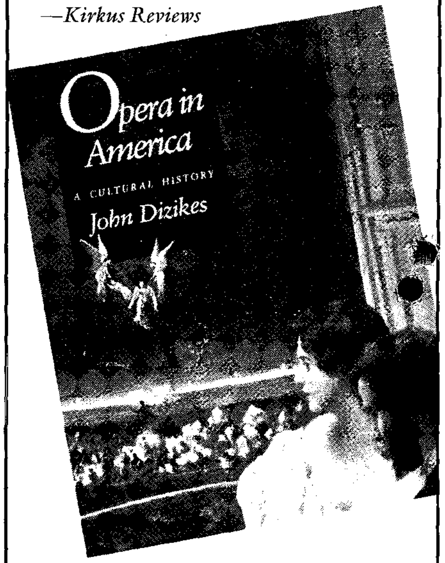
—*Kirkus Reviews*



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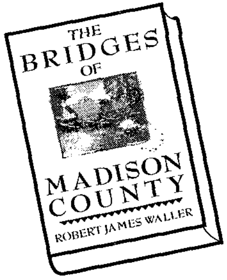

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sury of American Folklore and Folk Songs, compiled by Amy L. Cohen, with illustrations by fifteen artists (Scholastic; $29.95). This book could easily have and perhaps should have landed in the list of books for younger kids, but it makes a first-rate present for any age, really. Legends, stories, and songs of this nation have been grouped in fifteen sections (nonsense stuff, scary items, and so on), and they encompass enough minorities to satisfy the most affirmative of actions. The pictures are all by Caldecott honorees; for the most part, the texts and the words of the songs have not been bowdlerized or homogenized; and the whole book glows from the years of effort and care that went into producing it.

Arnold Schwarzenegger: Hercules in America, by Robert Lipsyte (HarperCollins; $14). This book, by a well-known *Times* sportswriter, presents a balanced view of the life and accomplishments of America's biggest movie-box-office draw. Lipsyte gives Arnold credit where credit is due—for overcoming the abuse of a tyrannical father, for having the determination to fulfill his goals, and, not least, for hanging on to that awkward moniker—but he also questions how appropriate it is for young people to admire a man who used psych-outs and steroids in his bodybuilding days and whose movies glorify violence. My son Willy came out of it with a greater understanding not only of the Terminator himself but of psychological complexity.

If you must boldly go where few grownups have ever gone before, into the mysterious galaxy of Y.A. fiction to search for alien gifts, take a look at **Help! I'm Trapped in My Teacher's Body**, by Todd Strasser (Scholastic; $2.95), which is a neat and funny and sometimes surprising execution of the plot encapsulated by the title; **Shakedown Street**, by Jonathan Nasaw (Delacorte; $14.95), about a homeless teen-age girl in San Francisco; **Missing Angel Juan**, by Francesca Lia Block (HarperCollins; $14); **Baby**, by Patricia MacLachlan (Delacorte; $13.95); **The Wings of a Falcon**, by Cynthia Voigt (Scholastic; $14.95); and **A Bone from a Dry Sea**, by Peter Dickinson (Delacorte; $16). If your step falters, try "True Grit," "To Kill a Mockingbird," "Little Women," "The Call of the Wild," "A Separate Peace," and "The Martian Chronicles." ◆

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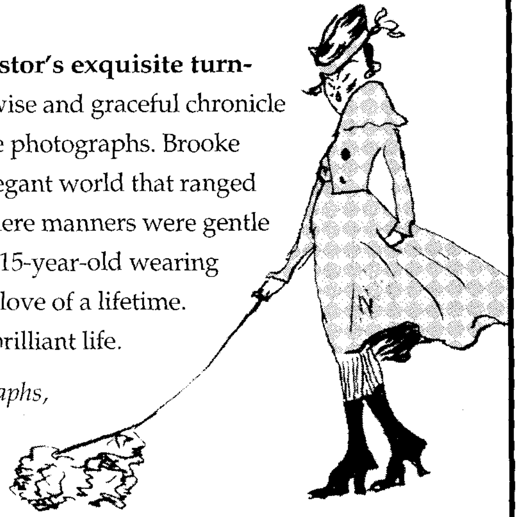

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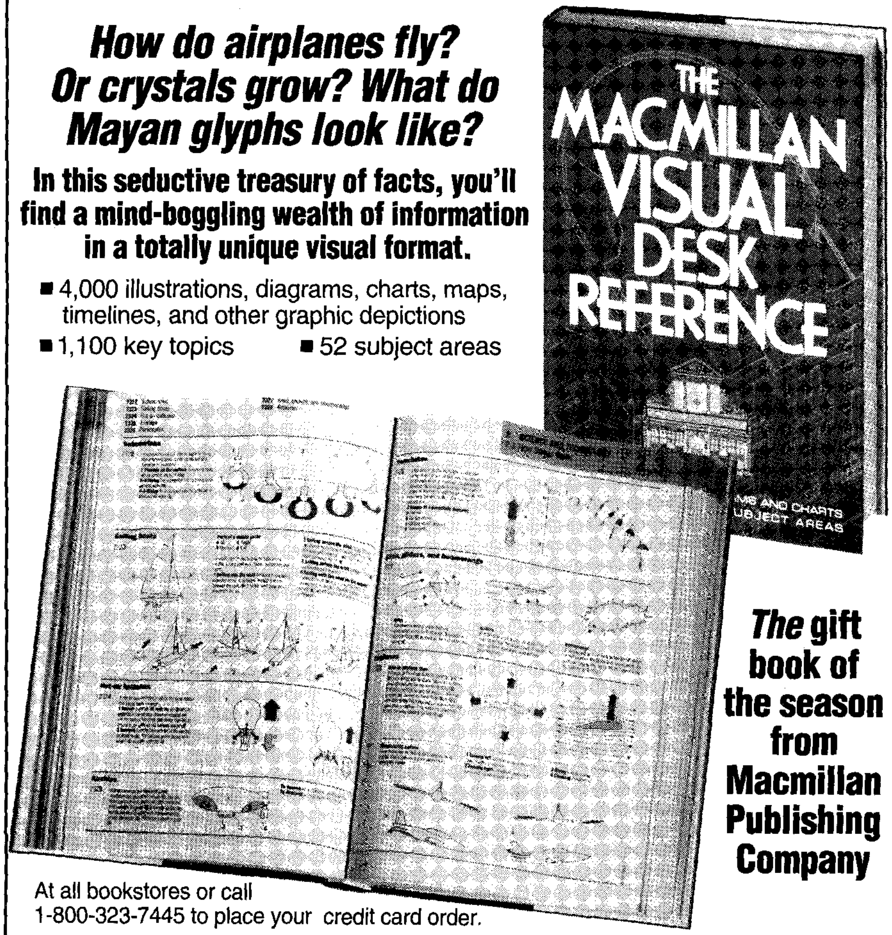

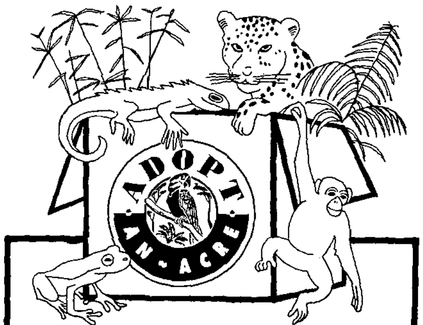

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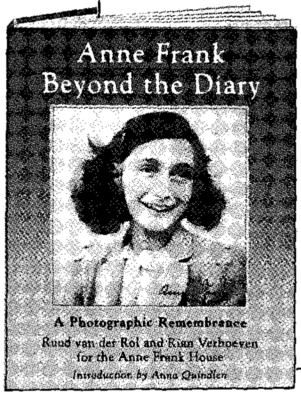
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THE CURRENT CINEMA

STARTING OVER

BY ANTHONY LANE

FELLINI is dead, Tarkovsky is dead, Bergman sticks to theatre, and Godard is out to lunch. All of which leaves European cinema wandering around like a lost kid. Rescue has come in the unlikely shape of the Polish director Krzysztof Kieślowski—unlikely because a résumé of his early career, most of it in documentaries, barely hints at the glories to come. The man who made "The Principles of Safety and Hygiene in a Copper Mine," fine work though that undoubtedly was, had a long path to tread before he arrived at "A Short Film About Killing," one of the least hygienic movies ever made, let alone at "The Double Life of Véronique," one of the most baffling and beautiful. His latest film, "Blue," is the first in a trilogy whose titles refer to the French tricolor, and to the declared aims of the Revolution—"Blue" for liberty, "White" for equality, "Red" for fraternity. It sounds like a pasty mix of the pompous and the schematic, but don't worry: Kieślowski couldn't make a predictable movie if he tried.

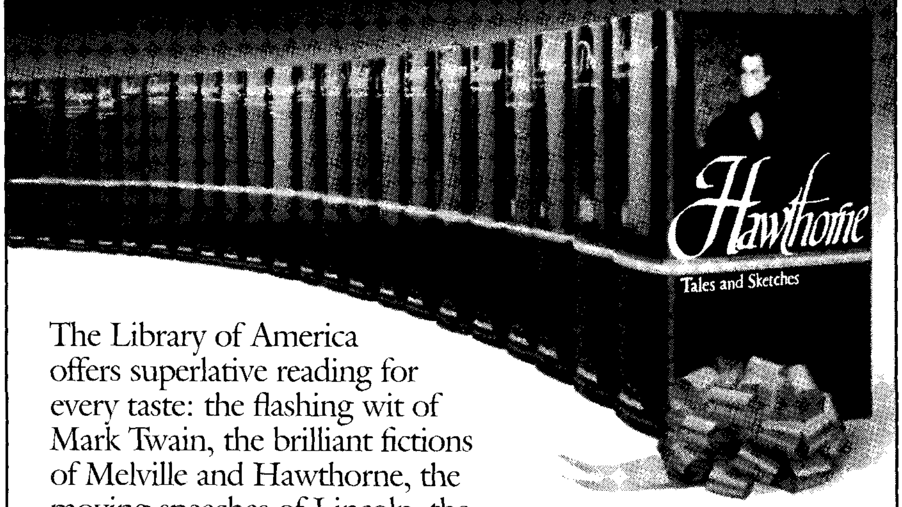
"Blue" is indeed about liberty, but if you're hoping for Gérard Depardieu to come bursting out of the Bastille with a ripped shirt, tough luck. Kieślowski is merely curious about the fate of a noble ideal: what has it dwindled into, two centuries on? He deals with an ironic and very particular sort of freedom—the sort that comes from having your family wiped out in a car wreck. Julie (Juliette Binoche) is travelling with her husband, a celebrated composer, and their young daughter, Anna, when their Alfa Romeo hits a tree. The violence of the event is not exhausted: some of it spills over into Julie, and one of her first actions on waking up in the hospital is to carry on the bad work by smashing a window. Kieślowski's movies are often touched by grief, but you never get the sense of a peaceful aftermath, of anything—or, indeed, anyone—being laid to rest. Current wisdom may urge the bereaved to pick up the pieces and start gluing, but Julie couldn't give a damn about rebuilding her old life; she wants a new one, and fast.

For a start, the family home in the country is to be cleared out and sold. "Why are you crying?" Julie asks the housekeeper. "Because you're not" comes the reply. Julie calls a friend, Olivier (Benoit Regent), asks him to come around, tells him to undress, sleeps with him, and says goodbye: "I'm like any other woman. I sweat. I cough. I have cavities. You won't miss me." It's a great speech, and a false hope: Julie is about as forgettable as Cleopatra, and however fiercely she dreams of a clean slate, the past will always return to scrawl unwanted messages all over it. She moves into an apartment in Paris, for instance, and reverts to her maiden name, but Olivier tracks her down. She throws the score of her husband's unfinished concerto into a garbage truck, but somebody has already made a copy, and anyway there are rumors that she herself composed it, and could thus complete the work in her own time. Lastly, she discovers that he had a mistress, who is now carrying his child.

Whether all these incidents amount to a plot is debatable. Yet the film presses on as if there were a race to be run or a great wrong avenged. As Julie struggles to pull away from the world, it yanks her back, and the tension between them hums like a wire. Sometimes, the edge of the frame is darkly filtered—you can sense fate coming down like a fog—but elsewhere Kieślowski switches to a handheld camera, running it along behind his characters as if he were still making documentaries and Paris were just another copper mine. Though anything less like a thriller would be hard to imagine, "Blue" is the only really frightening movie I've seen all year. One night, Julie looks down from her window and sees a man being beaten up in the street. He flees into her building and starts to bang on doors, working his way up toward her floor. You brace yourself for the knock, as she does; but Kieślowski makes you wait, and when it comes he turns the volume up full.

Moments like this blur the line between mainstream technique and the supposed concerns of art-house cinema—a boring distinction, in any case. Kieślowski is far more gutsy than cerebral: what you take away from "Blue" is not an intellectual pose but the slam of a piano lid, the scrape of knuckles against a stone wall, and the sight of Julie plunging into a deserted swimming pool—as echoing and scary as the one in Jacques Tourneur's "Cat People," with shadows rippling on the walls. Above all, there is a series of shock blackouts, matched by thunderous orchestral chords, attacking the screen out of nowhere. These can happen anyplace—in the pool, in a café, in the midst of a conversation—and when they are over, the camera returns to exactly where it was, as if time had stopped dead to allow for a rush of memory.

The movie hardly leaves Juliette Binoche alone for a minute, but she thrives on the attention. That round, milky face is so pure and serious, so thrifty with its shows of feeling, that directors seem to grow impatient with it, and even resort to violence in an effort to force a reaction. In "Les Amants du Pont-Neuf" (a chaotic but remarkable movie by Léos Carax, never released in this country), she was ravaged by eye disease; and in her previous—and worst—picture, "Damage," she had her head banged against the floor by Jeremy Irons. It was typical of that movie's crass erotic chic that she was supposed to enjoy this; Louis Malle put her through soulless routines, like a sex doll,



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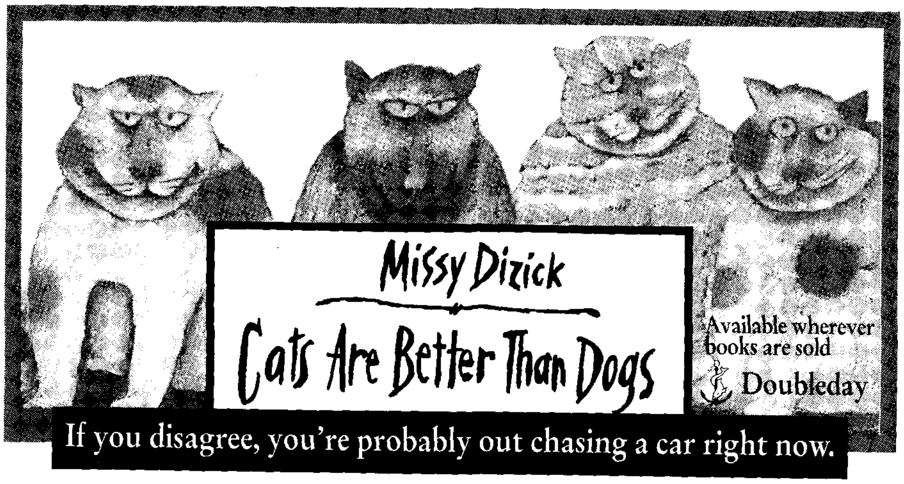
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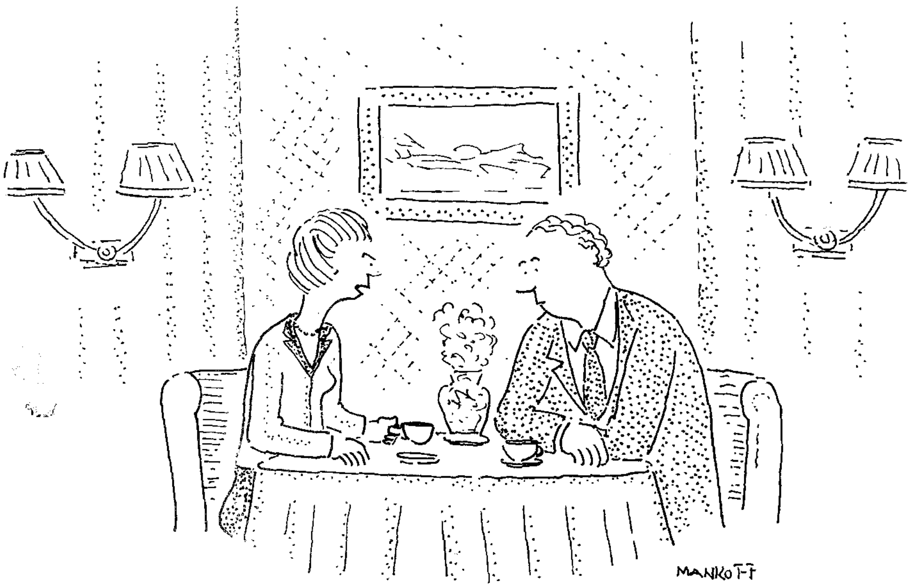
and in return he got a blankly bored performance. In "Blue," too, she starts off bruised and black-eyed, stiff in a neck brace, but slowly the movie brings her back to life, and she comes up fighting.

There's nothing very grand about this. Being a Kieślowski heroine, Julie tends to drop things and make snap decisions, and she's easily distracted by trivia—but then so is Kieślowski himself, almost all the time. He is taken aback by the vagaries of human nature, and if there is an urgency about his films it comes from the need to get that surprise across. The result is an odd marriage of brooding and slapstick, unique to Kieślowski but also alarmingly true to the on-off rhythms by which most of us live. I have seen "The Double Life of Véronique" four or five times now, and although there are plenty of things that don't make sense, I don't really mind—if anything, they become indispensable, like the maddening quirks of a friend. At key moments, both Julie and Véronique turn out their handbags, offering the private chaos of lipstick and photographs and candy wrappers as the clearest guide to the state of their souls. They could well be right.

All of which makes some people feel like Lady Bracknell: What on earth is all this fuss about handbags? Why doesn't this funny Polish guy just tell us what he means? But Kieślowski has spent long enough in a police state to acquire a thorough distrust of any movie, or poem, or play, that hustles its audience toward an agreed conclusion. His work radiates intensity, yet flickers with casual happenings; I feel more herded and browbeaten by Oliver Stone. Every moral that one tries to draw from "Blue" or "The Double Life of Véronique" seems an insult to the mysterious, often wordless procedures of Kieślowski's art. Not even in his "Decalogue," a series of TV films shot in Warsaw, and based on the Ten Commandments, did he raise his voice. "We just treated the Commandments as a set of rules," he explained, "which allow us to survive from day to day without breaking each other's necks." Critics back in Poland have lamented this political indifference, but Kieślowski seems to me an exquisitely political artist, precisely because of his refusal to be sententious and his curiosity about everything that eludes political control. No wonder



"What do you mean, you're getting cold feet? We've been married six years."

• •

his movies are so sexy, so blue: the bed is a free country.

DEBRA WINGER is as central to "A Dangerous Woman" as Juliette Binoche is to "Blue"; in both cases, the heroine is so single-minded that she nearly sends other minds up the wall. Winger plays Martha—backward, myopic, flat-footed, and fed largely on cereals, like a favorite donkey. She lives under the eye of her Aunt Frances (Barbara Hershey) and works at a dry cleaner's with her best friend, Birdy (Chloe Webb): a quiet life that suits her fine, and therefore cries out for dramatic interruption. This comes from Mackey (Gabriel Byrne), a seductive lush who comes to work first on the house and then on her affections; and from the seedy Getso (David Strathairn), who filches money and frames Martha for the crime.

Written by Naomi Foner and directed by her husband, Stephen Gyllenhaal, "A Dangerous Woman" is nicely set up and feels ready to go, but somehow, apart from one great scene involving a kitchen knife, it fails to take off. As Gyllenhaal showed in his previous films, "Paris Trout" and "Waterland," he has a taste for slow-cooking tension, matched only by an unfortunate habit of leaving it to simmer too long, until it grows glutinous and drab. I counted three occasions on which a major incident was followed by the words "Are you O.K.?" It's a bad habit, reeking of television, and suggests a director who doesn't quite trust the power of cinema to carry an audience; I wanted to stand up and shout, "Yeah, Steve, we're O.K. Get on with it."

It's all up to Debra Winger, then, to keep the movie alive. There's no doubt that she wants to hit you over the head with this performance, a natural progression from "Everybody Wins" and "The Sheltering Sky." There's something reckless about Winger, something beyond the spunky and the awkward; at times in the Bertolucci movie, you felt she really wanted to sling off all inhibitions and see how far the role could take her. To Bertolucci's credit, he let her wander, whereas Gyllenhaal lets her down, because he can't help worshipping the character. Martha is the holy fool who cannot tell a lie, the child with grownup desires: "You're like a primitive thing that's never been spoiled," Mackey murmurs. Knowing vaguely that kissing has to do with tongues, she licks his face like a dog—Winger never lets a technical trick go by. In the end, however, that inventive, exhausting assault on the role reminds me of Dustin Hoffman in "Rain Man," of Robert De Niro in "Awakenings," of John Malkovich in "Of Mice and Men." All of them are star turns, and what they promise makes you cringe: Step up, step up, and see the clever people play at simple minds. ♦

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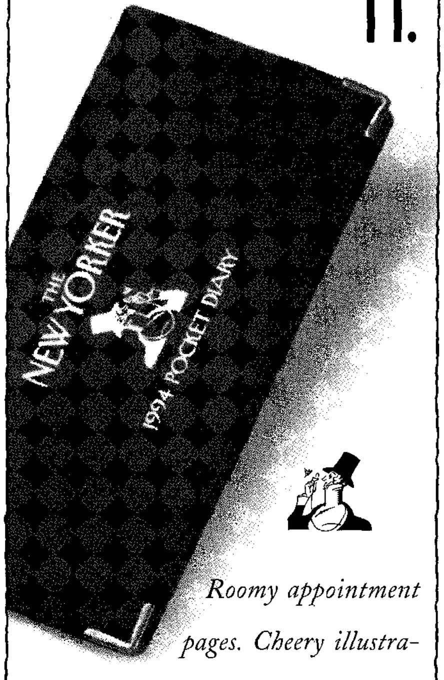

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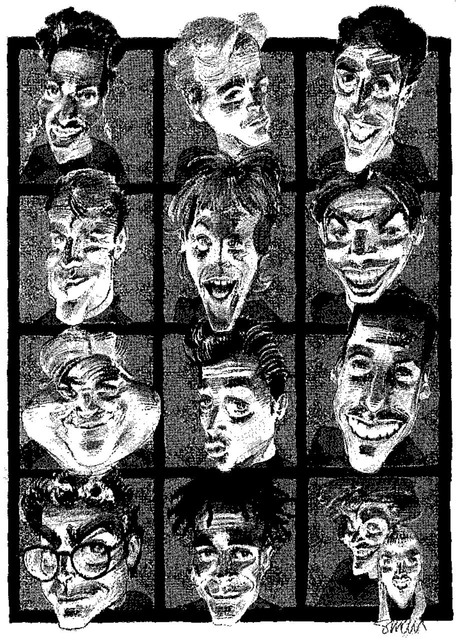
ON TELEVISION

AMATEUR HOURS

BY JAMES WOLCOTT

COULD performing become a thing of the past? When you watch the last vestiges of variety programming on TV today, it's as if singing, dancing, and comedy were in danger of becoming quaint artisan crafts, like glassblowing. Once, performers trained and practiced to transcend their everyday personalities, to become big-screen projections of their minds' desires. Now many of them insist on being true to their own sloppy selves. They settle for graphic interface with the audience, taking to heart Woody Allen's wisecrack that eighty per cent of life consists of showing up. "The Paula Poundstone Show," a comedy experiment in pain conducted on a live audience in Los Angeles, was a showcase for this vague new form of no-entertainment. Although the comedian dressed for her show like Circus Girl (striped pants, red vest, polka-dot bow tie), she presided over it as if it were a high-school assembly, addressing the audience as "you guys." "We got a pretty interesting show for you guys," she lied. Her première featured a recycling expert in a booth who fielded questions about landfill. On another segment, she handed out piles of "Paula" dollars to the audience, which were collected and deposited in transparent drums to show how our tax money is distributed. If the editor of *Tikkun* ever ran a summer camp, this is what it would be like—civics for simpletons.



The cast of "Saturday Night Live": shaped less by standup than by megadoses of MTV.

DAVID SMALL

I watched Paula Poundstone with appalled fascination, dumbfounded that such earnest dither occupied an hour of prime-time network television. The people at ABC must have been equally agape, because they dropped the cloth on her cage after only two episodes, even though they had committed themselves to thirteen. (It was the second-swiftest execution of the season, CBS having cancelled "South of Sunset" after just one show.) The embarrassing rubout of "The Paula Poundstone Show" has been compared with Chevy Chase's quick flop. Both were comics who through ego or bad advice let themselves get caught unprepared. But there's one difference. Chevy Chase's eyes knew fear. They flinched, as if pleading, "Please make it stop, please make it stop." Poundstone, on the other hand, was unfazed. She galumphed around onstage, nattering about nothing, her face a blank slate. She was like a pod person, Prozac in a flesh-colored shell. She seemed to screen out any signals that didn't conform to her alpha state.

The failure of "The Paula Poundstone Show" could be written off as a singular folly. The ensemble series "Saturday Night Live" has no such fallback. Now in its nineteenth year on NBC, "S.N.L." is a group effort boasting the largest regular lineup on TV. The opening credits seem to take forever, as the cast's hopeful young faces flip past like a pack of Actors' Equity playing cards. Yet, except for the veteran Phil Hartman, whose sentry eyes and denture-grip grin turn his square, plaster-of-Paris head into a *Mad*-magazine cartoon, the cast seems oddly starless. There's a distinct charisma deficiency. Even Mike Myers seems muted, perhaps atoning for getting uppity after "Wayne's World." It's as if the show's producer, Lorne

Michaels, were fielding a team of utility players—except that utility players are by definition versatile. In the past, "S.N.L." members could do impressions, create original nutcake characters, engage in slapstick, and confidently belt out a bad tune (as witness Bill Murray's stylishly tone-deaf lounge act). Previous cast members were capable of multiplying themselves.

Now each "S.N.L." member seems to have been issued a single shtick, which he or she beats to death. David Spade practices nasal one-upmanship. Adam Sandler (he does the annoying Opera Man), with his baseball cap worn backward and his acorn head, is a Gap ad gone wrong. Rob Schneider has never broadened beyond his copy-machine kibbitzer. ("It's Tom, making copies, the Tomminator, the Tom-meister.") The most overindulged one-note is Chris Farley, a comic who plays every scene as if about to bust a gut. (And what a gut.) It seems almost cruel to watch this heavy young man heave and breathe hard and hitch up his belt and thump himself on the chest to dislodge food from his throat. You can't enjoy the way he uses his bulk, the way you can enjoy watching John Goodman navigate the furniture in "Roseanne," because there's nothing airy to Farley's movements, only sweaty desperation. He's a party animal without a party. You watch him convulsing on the floor and you want to say, "Listen, John Belushi already died once. Get a grip." As for the women in the cast, they could stage a work stoppage and who would know?

It isn't that the cast lacks talent. It's that talent counts less than creating an accessible persona that travels light. Nearly all the members of the "S.N.L." crew make drop-in appearances on "Late Night with Conan O'Brien," which is also produced by Lorne Michaels. Indeed, "Late Night" has become an auxiliary arm of "S.N.L." Switch it on almost any night and you might catch "S.N.L." 's Julia Sweeney singing a duet with Jonathan Richman, Adam Sandler making prank calls, Sarah Silverman klutzily tap-dancing. It is on Conan's show that the zero-substance approach to comedy undergoes the strictest lab tests. Its recurring characters make the "S.N.L." creations look layered by comparison. There's a teen-age dervish called Diz, who spins himself around on the set until he falls down. There's a hippie type who, wearing a sign around his neck which says "Skull Juice," dribbles drink from his nose and mouth into a glass. Conan also has a wacky next-door neighbor who's always pruning his plastic hedges. These bits don't have enough riding on them to bomb. They're just there, disconnected from the rest of the show, as pointlessly silly as the cartoon wrappers for Bazooka gum. They don't aspire to irony, or satire, or subversion, or trapdoor surprise. It's a comedy of diminished expectations, a series of almost indifferent, self-involved riffs.

The younger cast members of "S.N.L.," like the minor players on "Late Night," seem to have sensibilities shaped less by standup comedy than by megadoses of MTV. They drape themselves in front of the camera like MTV v.j.s, their cute patter and limp posture allying them with "slackers." Like MTV v.j.s, they're there mostly to lend some youth to the voice track. They don't physicalize, the way baby-boom comics like Robin Williams or Billy Crystal do. They don't attack the fourth wall, because they don't think in theatrical terms. They don't even think in television terms. To them, the camera is a video companion, a bigger version of the family camcorder—their babysitter. The twentysomethings they mirror and affectionately mock (one of the few good "S.N.L." parodies this season was a takeoff of MTV's "Real World") are a reflective, recessive, media-saturated generation, constantly burrowing back into preadolescence, wearing their flannel shirts and floppy jeans at a low ebb, like rumpled cocoons. Waif models such as Kate Moss, with their wan, sad-sprite eyes, spiritualize the malaise of the twentysomethings, as did the late River Phoenix, a male waif. This cultural sense of chronic fatigue isn't very conducive to comedy.

ANOTHER reason for the identity crisis that traditional TV entertainment is suffering is that the barriers between professional and amateur have been eaten away. Anybody can get into the act. I once heard a comic explain why he had quit standup: "I just couldn't handle the hecklers. I didn't mind competing with pros, but those amateurs will kill you." This territorial struggle is now being played out on daytime TV, which has been dominated for decades by soap operas. With the barrage of new talk shows hosted by Oprah wannabes such as Bertice Berry, Les Brown, Mo Gaffney, and Ricki Lake, daytime soaps are on the defensive. (NBC shut down "Santa Bar-

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bara," and ABC's "General Hospital" has been reduced to hauling Luke and Laura out of the ashes.) Critics and comics who trash daytime talk shows usually stress the freaky-deaky topics: "Men Who Wear Diapers—and the Women Who Change Them," "Past-Life Experiences of Elvis Impersonators," "Devil-Worshippers Who Put Their Demon Spawn up for Adoption—and Now Rue the Day!"

Such mockery is behind the curve. Daytime talk has become domesticated. Instead of an exotic display of Diane Arbus social rejects and defects, the shows feature panels of what pass for ordinary folk feuding or reconciling or trying to bridge personal gaps. There's usually a peppy yet caring psychotherapist on hand to help them vent. As if anyone could stop them from venting. Insults and accusations fly as a solid row of women (the shows are skewed toward a female audience) confront their most intimate foes—overbearing mothers-in-law, the men who stole their virginity, family members who molested them, former best friends who betrayed their trust, teen-age daughters who dress like tramps. The arguments aren't always oral. I saw an episode of "Ricki Lake" in which a pair of big gals nearly got into a slap fight. If the feuds often seem faked, they can at least be funny in small clips, as evidenced by the highlights presented on the E! channel's hilarious "Talk Soup." It's the heartfelt reconciliations that are truly revolting—ritual weepies capped with feel-good hugs which make me, for one, ashamed to be an unhyphenated American.

How have these civilian shows been able to establish such inroads in the afternoon? What they've done is shoplift the traditional conflicts and tear-jerking of the daytime soaps and stage them without benefit of buffed actors, flashy wardrobes, fancy sets, and endless cans of hair spray. They provide barefaced pathos without the bourgeois trappings. The daytime talk shows bear the same relation to daytime soaps that amateur porn bears to pro shoots. They're cranking out similar product, at deep-discount prices.

A durable genre, the daytime soap will no doubt adapt to its new competition (or die). But as we head down that five-hundred-channel highway—as markets and audiences fragment—advertising dollars will be so widely dispersed that profit margins may be sliced thin, and so threaten much of the television we take for granted. It may become tougher and tougher to fund talent-intensive programming. Signs of this tighter intake are already apparent. The prime-time soap is virtually no more. The "Paula Poundstone" fiasco probably put the final nail in the variety format. It's plausible to imagine that in a few years the hour-long prime-time drama itself will be a rare species, replaced by cheaper, "reality" programming. As it is, nearly every network anchorperson has his or her own magazine show.

Some pundits welcome this overthrow of make-believe. Away with actors. Down with screenplays. If the future is informational, interactive, cyberkinetic, then no longer will a Hollywood or Manhattan élite be able to dictate and dumb down mass taste. As the technopopulist Puritan visionary George Gilder expresses it in his book "Life After Television," "television acts as a severe bottleneck to creative expression, driving thousands of American writers and creators into formulaic banality or near-pornographic pandering." The new technology, he submits, will smash the bottleneck, bypass committee-think, reanimate the individual. On our telecomputers we'll be able to dial up our own diversions, custom-made. Gilder declares, "The possibilities are endless: Create a school in your home that offers the nation's best teachers imparting the moral, cultural, and religious values you cherish. Visit your family on the other side of the world with moving pictures hardly distinguishable from real-life images. Have your doctor make house calls without leaving his office. Give a birthday party for Grandma at her nursing home in Florida, bringing her descendants from all over the country at the foot of her bed in vivid living color." Sounds gruesome, doesn't it? Like a Ron Howard film that won't quit.

If so many performers seem half there these days, it may be because they sense they're being phased out in favor of fibre-optic fodder. But, I wonder, after a long day working for The Man, how interactive, how participatory, do we really want to be? Gilder is the latest in a long line of lofty scolds to claim that television-watching and moviegoing foster passivity. (It's a neo-Tolstoyan complaint.) But when there's beauty and talent and driven vision on the screen, passivity can be a form of ravishment. If we're all behind the curtain working the controls, like the Wizard of Oz, there'll be no Dorothy left to dazzle. ♦

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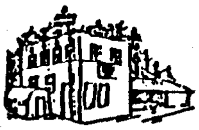

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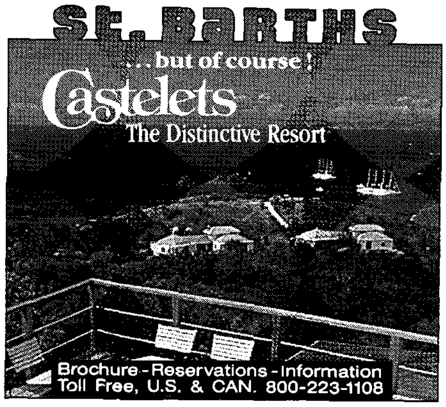

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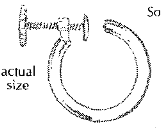

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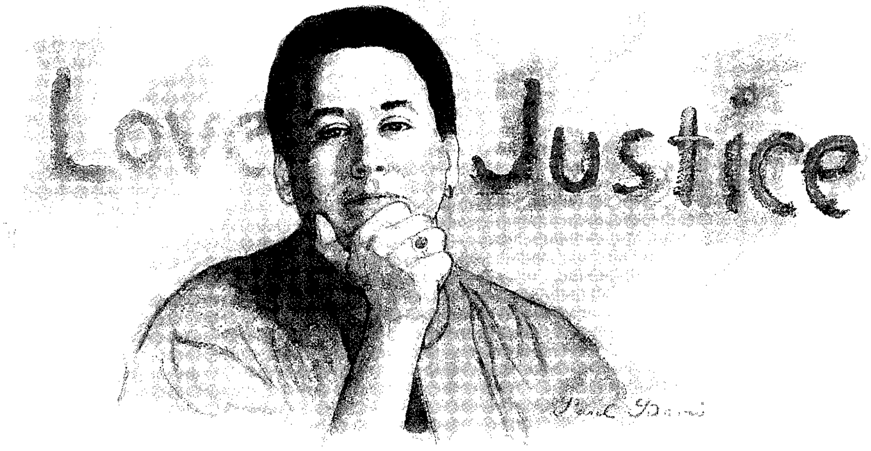
EARTH ANGELS

BY JOHN LAHR

TONY KUSHNER wrote "Perestroika," the second part of "Angels in America," in what he describes as "an incredible eight days I spent at the Russian River, in Northern California, in April of 1991, ten months after my mother died." The play was a tape-measure job—three hundred pages, five acts—that would take six hours to perform. After finishing the epilogue, Kushner threw his belongings in his car and set off down through the Napa Valley toward San Francisco. Almost immediately, life began to imitate the play's marvels and resonances. "When I got in the car, this magical thing happened," Kushner told me the day before he jetted off to watch the London production of his superbly expanded and polished final product (it had been reworked in collaboration with its director, George C. Wolfe, and the New York cast of "Millennium Approaches"), at the Royal National Theatre, and five days before the same version opened on Broadway. "I turned on the radio, and the first thing that came on was 'American Pie.' I started to lose that station, so I switched to the next station. It was Simon and Garfunkel, singing 'America.' Then a group called, I think, the Black Crowes, singing the song 'She Talks to Angels.' Then I switched to a classical-music station that was playing Mozart's bassoon concerto, which was one of my mother's practice pieces. That was amazing. Really amazing." When Kushner got to San Francisco, he installed himself and his humongous manuscript in a café on Market Street and called his friends. "For the entire evening, people came by," he said. "It was a huge party. I ran up this immense bill on bottles of champagne. It was worth it. I really didn't know if, especially after my mother died, I'd ever finish the play, which bracketed my mother's death, and contains it—a form of mourning and a form of not letting go."



Tony Kushner's "Perestroika," now on Broadway, dramatizes the work of mourning.

PAUL DAVIS

"Perestroika"—the word is the Russian for "rebuilding"—dramatizes the work of mourning: the struggle to embrace both loss and change. The play is immense in its wisdom of the heart; every line sings with hurt and humor. Although Kushner has cut the playing time and the number of pages by half, the five-act structure remains intact, parcelled neatly around two intermissions, and is crucial to Kushner's vision of the play's metaphor. " 'Perestroika' doesn't have that classical cadence, that one-two-three punch—a beginning, a kickup, and a bang," he says. " 'Pere-

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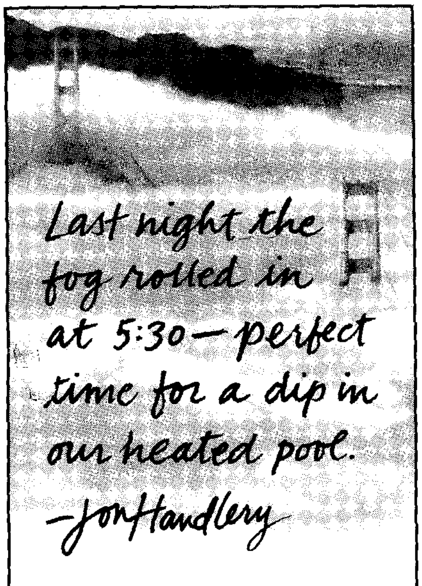
stroika' doesn't rise and fall in the same way. It's iambic pentameter: 'this and then this and then this and then this and then this.' It's epic. You experience each act very much as an installment of a journey, and you feel, I hope, that at the end you've arrived at a huge place. It's very tricky. For me, the bulk of it—the epic nature of it—becomes part of what it's about: this incredible struggle I feel people have to wage in order to be able to change themselves."

At the end of "Millennium Approaches," all the characters have come to grief and to stalemate. The Mormon wife, Harper, has lost her bisexual lawyer husband, Joe Pitt. Hannah Pitt, Joe's mother, has sold her house in Salt Lake City to move to New York. The defiantly macho Roy Cohn has contracted AIDS. Prior Walter, also suffering from AIDS, has been abandoned first by his lover, Louis, and then, apparently, by his senses, as an angel crashes through the ceiling of his apartment at the finale to announce that Prior is a prophet and she is the messenger. But of what? In "Perestroika," the angel turns out to be an angel of stasis, part of the forces of entropy creating the climate of collapse which Prior has either to join or to reject. She carries a red-and-gold "Tome of Immobility, of respite, of cessation." Suspended above Prior and somersaulting occasionally to make a point, the angel (the strong-jawed, fierce-eyed Ellen McLaughlin) is the voice of retreat in the face of overwhelming loss. "Forsake the Open Road," she tells him, sounding like a retrograde Walt Whitman. To Kushner, who is staunchly agnostic, the angel "embodies the longing for a cosmic regression which is so profound that it becomes deeply reactionary and destructive." For the new production, Kushner has cut a lot of the cosmic flimflammery from the début version of "Perestroika" (which was at the Mark Taper Forum, in Los Angeles), and, by showing Prior to be as puzzled as the audience by the angelic visitation, has made it more dramatic. Prior wants to know if the angel is there to damn or save him. "In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Day of Wrath is both the day of wrath and the coming of the Kingdom of God," Kushner says. "The honey of Heaven may or may not come. You don't get the answer. You get an absolute maybe." Is Prior a prophet? Or is the visitation a dream? In his quandary, Prior (played, by Stephen Spinella, with a poignant and ever-increasing comic command) bolts from the angel. "He is running, he thinks, in defiance of the angel's command to 'be still,' " Kushner wrote in his notes to the director of the English production, Declan Donnellan, "and of course in the process is running himself to death." Prior and all the characters in "Perestroika" teeter on this delicate, terrifying balance between resignation and action. Choice is made harder because the characters have been abandoned both by God and by ideology. A note of historical confusion is sounded in the prologue by the oldest living Bolshevik, Aleksii Antedilluvianovich Prelapsarianov, who in the play's first beats raises the question of change. "The Great Question before us is: Can we Change? In Time? And we all desire that Change will come," he says. His old eyes hidden behind sunglasses, Aleksii goes on to scold the audience about "this Sour Little Age," and warns: "If the snake sheds his skin before a new skin is ready, naked he will be in the world, prey to the forces of chaos. . . . Have you, my little serpents, a new skin?"

At the beginning of "Perestroika," the skins of all the characters are by no means thick. They evade the excruciating pain of loss by an obsession with fantasy or with flesh. Harper is distracted by grief. "I'm stuck," she says. "My heart's an anchor." ("What I love in the character," Kushner wrote in his notes to the director, "is that she is both very brave and amazingly inventive in her avoidance, she creates spectacular routes of escape and then unravels them because she knows they're untrue.") Marcia Gay Harden gives Harper's poetry and pottiness fine definition as she acts out her anguish by chewing down a tree at the Botanic Garden arboretum and, later, spending hours at the Mormon diorama at the Visitors' Center in New York, looking at "The Great Trek," because the main figure reminds her of Joe. "When they push the buttons he'll start to talk," she tells Prior, who is there to learn more about angels. "You can't believe a word he says but the sound of him is reassuring. It's an *incredible* resemblance." Cohn, now pasty and shrunken as he lies in a hospital bed, still wields his furious power as a bulwark against change. He dies, significantly, echoing


Last night the fog rolled in at 5:30—perfect time for a dip in our heated pool.
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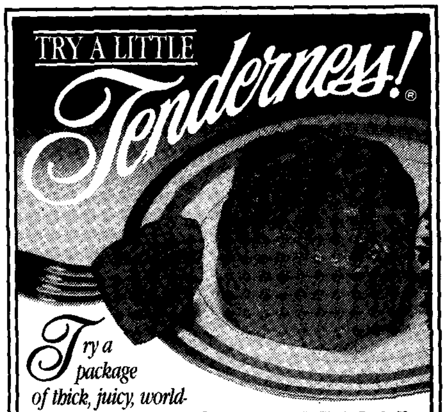
the words with which he's introduced in "Millennium Approaches." "A nice big box of drugs for Uncle Roy!" he shouts on the phone, blackmailing someone into getting him some AZT. "Or there'll be seven different kinds of hell to pay!" In a perfectly modulated and unforgettable performance, Ron Leibman, with his tongue darting out and with bloodshot eyes shrinking to beads of hate in his gnarled face, turns the bedridden Cohn into a kind of iguana of invective. The hectoring generates a self-hypnotic sense of power, which cuts Cohn off from his loss. "Tough little muscle," he says of his heart. "Never bleeds."

Prior, on the other hand, is full of raw, contradictory feelings, still imagining Louis's return and confessing to feeling "lascivious sad." Louis, for his part, is just plain lascivious. He assuages his guilt by submerging himself in appetite. "What he wants from Joe is the sort of impossible, cost-free salvation Joe seems to offer," Kushner writes. "To get this, Louis has to submit to Joe—politically, sexually, psychologically." As Louis, Joe Mantello has continued to extend the subtlety of his marvellous characterization, and superbly savors the self-loathing in Louis's sexual narcotics. Louis forces himself to connect with Joe Pitt, his ideological opposite, as a kind of penance. "The nose tells the body—the heart, the mind, the fingers, the cock—what it wants," he says, licking Joe's cheeks in one of the most extraordinary seduction scenes I've ever seen, "and then the tongue explores, finding out what's edible, what isn't, what's most mineral, food for the blood, food for the bones, and therefore most delectable." Louis puts his hand down the front of Joe's pants, pulls it out, and smells and then tastes his fingers. "Chlorine. Copper. Earth," he says, and makes his move. Joe falls in love with Louis. This is one of Kushner's major discoveries in the rewrite, and allows him to extend their relationship beyond political squabbling to the play's more central issue: Where do love and justice meet? "I mean you say law isn't Justice and Justice isn't morals," Louis says in the middle of one of their bouts of lovemaking, "but really, who if not the Right is putting the Prude back in Jurisprudence?" David Marshall Grant makes Joe at once sweetly expansive in love and obtusely closed down in life. When, late in the play, Louis and Joe



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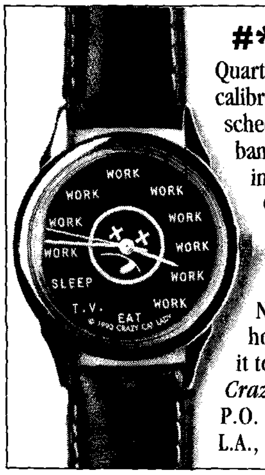

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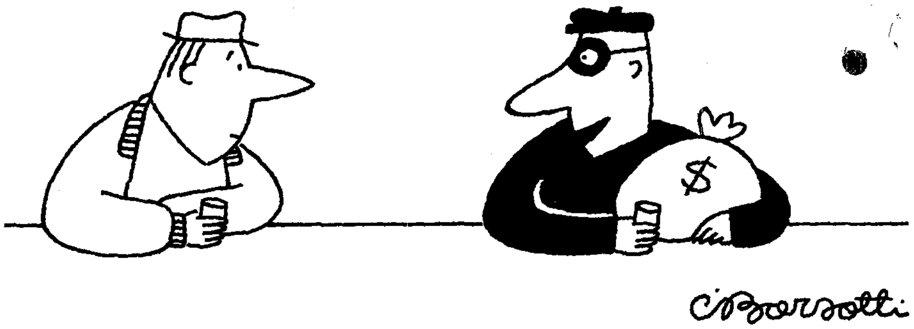
square off against each other over Joe's ghostwriting of reactionary legal decisions, Joe continues to bleat, "It's law, not justice, it's power, not the merits of its exercise, it's not an expression of the ideal, *it's* . . ." And there's an ugly fight, in which Louis gets bloodied. "It's literally having blood on his hands that makes Joe get it," Kushner wrote in his notes.

The black nurse, Belize, is the character who mediates between the living and the dead, and between Louis and Prior. As Belize, Jeffrey Wright comes into his own in "Perestroika," stamping the character with a distinctive, camp combination of fury and fun. When Cohn boasts, "Pain's . . . nothing, pain's life," Belize counters, "Sing it, baby." Belize is the play's moral bellwether. He tips off Louis to Joe's ghostwriting and to his relationship to Cohn, and it's also Belize who recognizes in Cohn not just the "polestar of human evil," as Louis calls him, but a fallen gay brother. "A queen can forgive her vanquished foe," Belize says. "It isn't easy. . . . Forgiveness. Which is maybe where love and justice finally meet." He engineers an epiphany of love and justice by getting Louis to say Kaddish over Cohn's dead body while he steals Cohn's AZT to prolong Prior's life. In this exquisite scene, Kushner manages to act out both anger and atonement by having Louis and the ghost of Ethel Rosenberg finish the prayer, saying in counterpoint, "You sonofabitch."

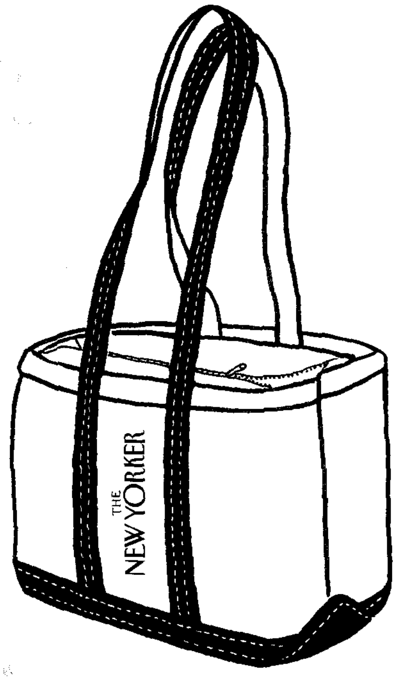
For most of the characters, the play's arc leads to an acceptance of loss and to a new kind of strength in solitude. "Sometimes, maybe lost is best," Harper tells Joe, who returns on the rebound from Louis. "Get lost, Joe. Go exploring." She hands him her Valium stash and exits from their symbiotic relationship into a hard-won, clear-eyed independence. In an airplane on the way to San Francisco, she thinks of the hole in the ozone layer and has a vision of dead souls floating up "like skydivers in reverse, limbs all akimbo, wheeling and spinning." The departed clasp hands and form a web that repairs the hole. "Nothing's lost forever," she says in one of Kushner's most gorgeous speeches. "In this world, there is a kind of painful progress. Longing for what we've left behind, and dreaming ahead."

Prior, too, has fought his way to a spiritual place. He climbs a neon ladder to Heaven and confronts a congress of angels, the Council of Continental Principalities. "We live past hope. If I can find hope *anywhere*, that's it, that's the best I can do," he tells them, finally rejecting the "Tome of Immobility" and able to receive the gift of the dead, which is a renewed sense of life. "I want more life," he says. Prior becomes strong enough to accept his isolation and his death. "This is my life, from now on, Louis. I'm not getting 'better,'" he says. Louis declares his love for Prior and asks to come back, but Prior, while acknowledging love, also acknowledges that some hurts are irreparable. "You can't come back," he finally tells Louis. "Not ever. I'm sorry. But you can't." Mourning has led him to a new way of being. "To face loss. With grace. Is key, I think, but it's impossible," he says.

There's comparable gallantry in the passionate restraint of George C. Wolfe's production. Wolfe inherited "Millennium Approaches" when the script was frozen, after its successful London and Mark Taper productions, but here, in reimagining "Perestroika" for Broadway, he has been free to impose his swift, unfettered intelligence on the material. As a result, the play is tighter, sharper, more scenically and emotionally streamlined than "Millen-



" 'Alleged,' please, 'alleged.' "



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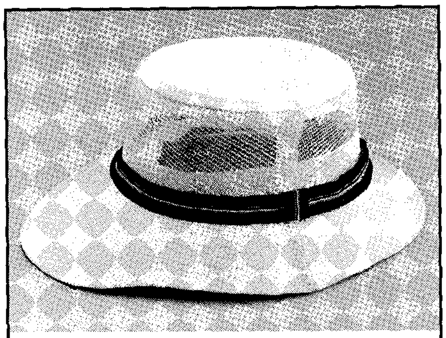
nium Approaches." Robin Wagner's set is simpler and more effective; and Jules Fisher, the maestro of the lighting board, shapes an array of subtle and suggestive moods.

Just before the Epilogue, Hannah Pitt (the formidable Kathleen Chalfant), whose rigidity has lost her the allegiance of her homosexual son but who learns tolerance through her friendship with Prior, takes leave of him in the hospital, promising to come again. "Please do," Prior says, invoking Tennessee Williams: "I have always depended on the kindness of strangers." Hannah, who has no self-pity and doesn't seem to know the famous line, rounds on Prior, saying, "Well, that's a stupid thing to do." It's a big laugh, but it's also telling. Not since Williams has a playwright announced his poetic vision with such authority on the Broadway stage. Kushner is the heir apparent to Williams' romantic theatrical heritage: he, too, has tricks in his pocket and things up his sleeve, and he gives the audience "truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion." And, also like Williams, Kushner has forged an original, impressionistic theatrical vocabulary to show us the heart of a new age.

At the finale, which jumps forward four years, to 1990, with Prior still alive and chatting happily with his "family"—Louis, Belize, Hannah—beneath the angel at the Bethesda Fountain in Central Park, Kushner takes another leaf from Williams' book. He lets Prior stop-start the vivacious chat the way Tom Wingfield does in "The Glass Menagerie." "The world only spins forward. We will be citizens. The time has come," Prior says to us, turning upstage and then, almost as an afterthought, turning back to deliver the ineffably moving envoi. "Bye now," he says. "You are fabulous creatures. And I bless you: *More Life*. The Great Work Begins." And on that note of blessing—at once elegiac and adamant—the characters take leave of us. But, long after the ovation is over, we retain their sense of life and struggle and miracle. In the strict sense of the word, we *are* all fabulous—"the subjects of whom stories are told." And Kushner, in his bighearted and almost reckless bravery, has told a great story. There will be those who will regret the subject matter, or the length, or the cosmic folderol. But the carping hardly matters. "Perestroika" is a masterpiece. ♦



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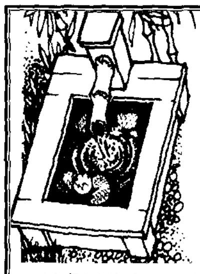

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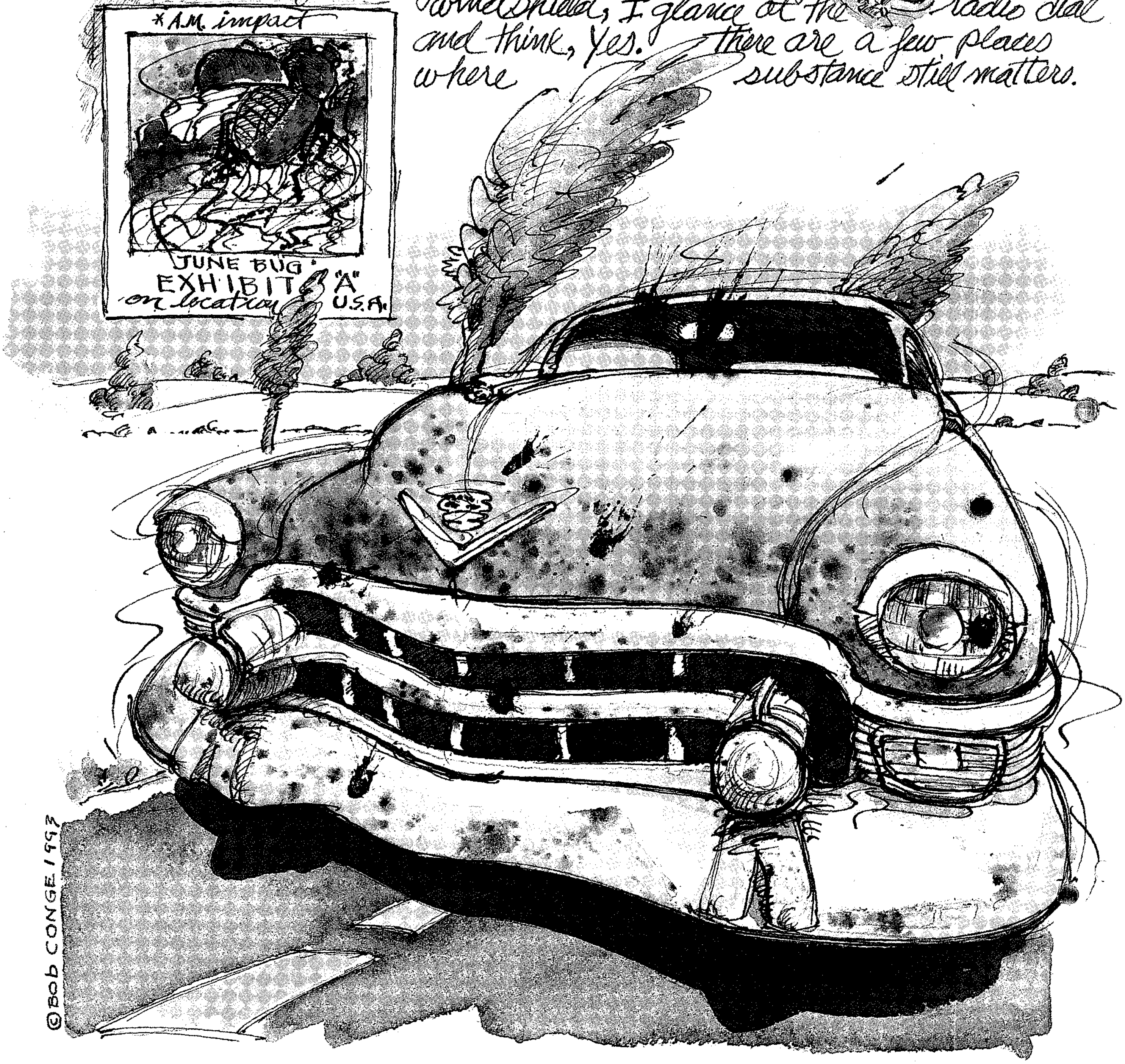
8 july

The june bug Jackson Pollocked my windshield. And as I looked at its innards, I saw substance. Which made me think. Is there still room in a society of disposable razors, disposable cars and disposable marriages for anything with substance? Or is the American mind so completely closed that it can no longer digest anything but cerebral cupcakes? Mental junk food filled with a lot of air. And as another june bug adds to the painting on the windshield, I glance at the radio dial and think, Yes. There are a few places where substance still matters.



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THE ART WORLD

PAINT BECOMES FLESH

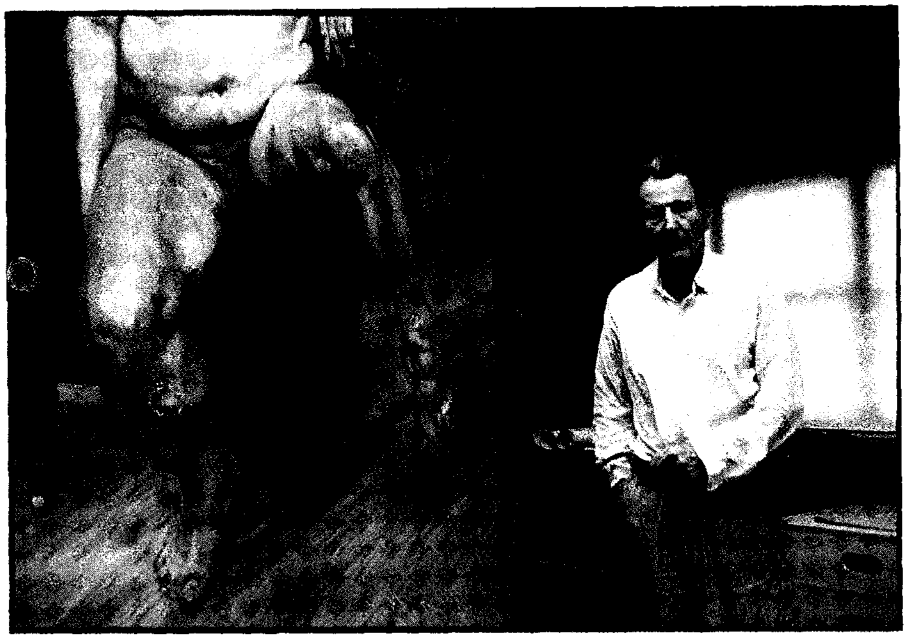
BY JOHN RICHARDSON

FOR his overwhelming new painting "Evening in the Studio," Lucian Freud has drawn equally upon the ridiculous and the sublime. The painting, which was finished only four weeks ago, contrasts a pneumatic nude of a woman known as Big Sue with the artist's whippet, Pluto, and a whippet-thin woman named Nicola. The rumbustious, cartoonlike side to "Evening in the Studio" derives from the notoriously vulgar Donald McGill, who was famous for his raunchy postcards of fat women with wimpy little husbands, which are still sold on the promenades of Britain's less posh seaside places. The postcard in this case depicts a whale of a woman in a bathing suit about to be swamped by the incoming sea: "Move over, Bessie, and let the tide come in," a coastguardsman tells her.

"Evening in the Studio" also pays tribute to Velázquez. Freud admits that Velázquez is very much present in his recent paintings. I detect his presence in the light that animates every square inch of the picture surface; in the intense inner life with which each figure is endowed; in the variety and beauty of the texture; in the discretion with which Freud manipulates drama and mystery; and in the color that looks so right, so natural, that at first it draws no attention to itself.

Freud would have us believe that this work depicts a typical evening in his studio. But it is as much about painting as it is about human relationships or conditions, and perhaps more so. Isn't the potential of paint to *become* flesh and not merely to simulate it what all Freud's late works celebrate? Hence their amazing palpability. Transubstantiation through art.

Two large exhibitions—pre-1957 work at the Robert Miller Gallery (November 23rd through January 8th) and post-1980 work, plus a few major examples from earlier periods, at the Metropolitan (December 16th through March 13th)—enable us to follow Freud's progress from neophyte to *petit maître* and then go on to see what a formidable *grand maître* he has become over the last couple of decades. The Metropolitan show comes to us from the Whitechapel Art Gallery, in Lon-



Lucian Freud in his London studio with "*Leigh Bowery* (*Seated*)," *1990.*

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don, where I spent some time last month looking at the paintings with the artist. He had recently told the photographer Bruce Bernard that anything he says about his work is as relevant to the final result "as the grunts that tennis players emit when making their shots." I must say I found Freud's grunts most informative.

The Robert Miller show has been organized without the collaboration of the artist; hence the absence of illustrations from the catalogue. Authorized or not, the show includes many of his finest early paintings and drawings and reveals how intense his youthful vision was. The portraits of the artist's two wives, Kitty Garman and Caroline Blackwood, have the rapt, apprehensive gaze of the Virgin in an Annunciation. Drawings prickle with delicate detail, and there is a wonderful sensitivity of tone and color. Freud regrets the inclusion of what he calls "studio scraps"—things he hates to see on public exhibition.

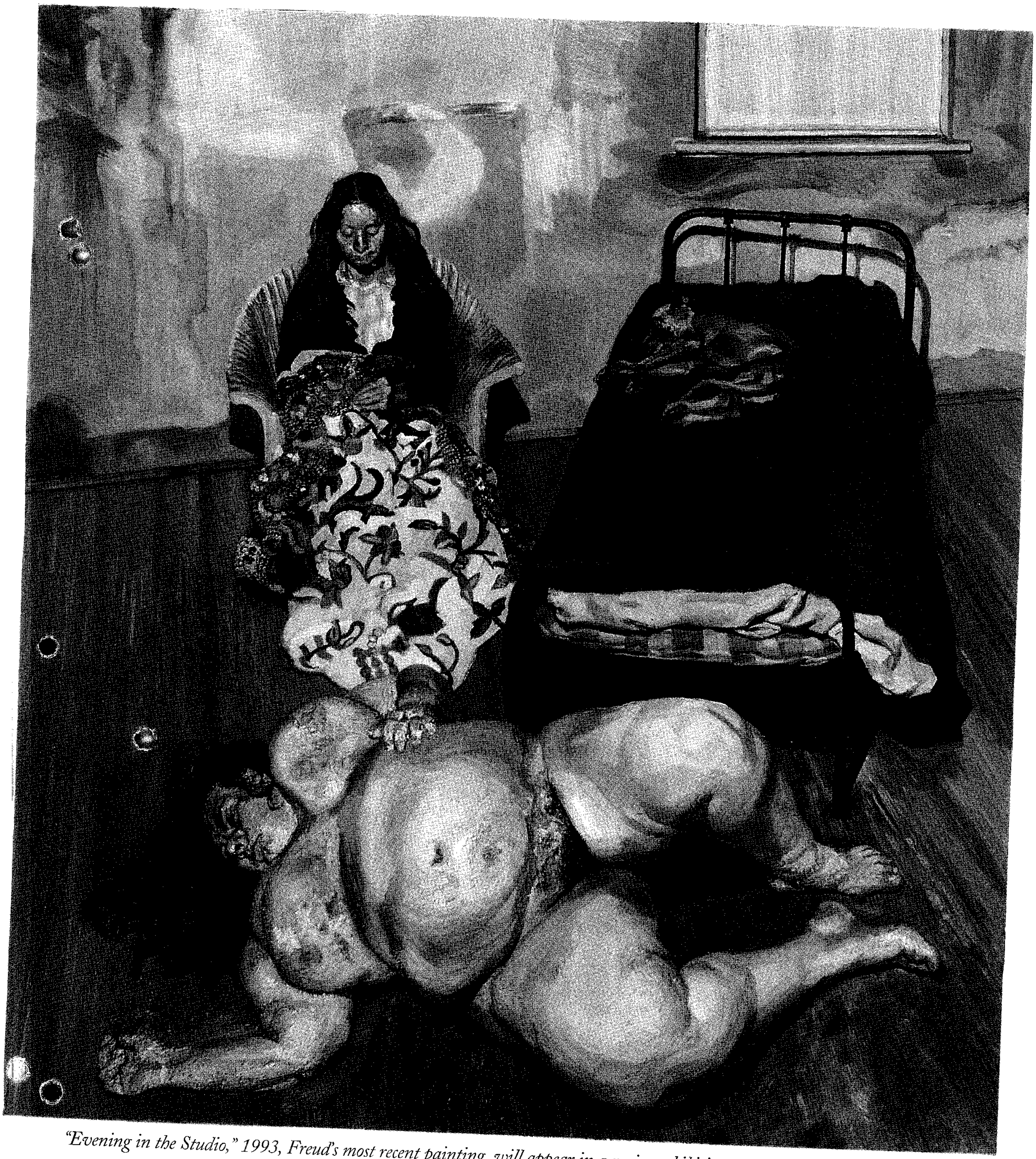
I FIRST met Lucian Freud a little over fifty years ago, when we were both art students in wartime England. He reminded me of Dargelos, the charismatic schoolboy whom Cocteau deified for his audacity and insolence and brooding gamin looks. Lucian was already something of a legend for running away to sea at the age of eighteen, also for setting Cedric Morris's art school on fire by smoking in the studio at night. He expressed himself then, as he does now, with devastating candor, in a voice too finely inflected to be entirely English. Contemporaries like me prized Lucian for his mercurial intelligence, wit, and panache; for the wiliness he had acquired as a child in Berlin, where he was brought up, by his architect father (the youngest of Sigmund Freud's three sons); and for having had the initiative, by the age of twenty, to forge a style that was unpretentious, personal, and cleverly tailored to his emergent skills. Lucian's oft-quoted claim to have started off with "no natural aptitude for art whatsoever" should not be taken too seriously. It was merely a ploy to counter his mother's boasts about his prowess. The modesty turned out to be the more effective for being false. If Lucian lacked "natural aptitude," where did that leave the rest of us?

As a young man, Lucian seemed acutely self-conscious—shy and a touch exhibitionistic, yet resentful of the attention his exhibitionism sometimes triggered. His favorite haunt was the ornate, eighteen-ninetyish bar of the Café Royal, which was still frequented by the subjects of Max Beerbohm's cartoons, still redolent of *The Yellow Book* ("Scent of Tutti-Frutti-Sen-Sen / And cheroots upon the floor," to quote John Betjeman's poem about the place). One wartime evening, I remember seeing Lucian at the center of a greenery-yallery group, as thin and sharp-profiled as a cutout, standing on one leg like a stork, his eyes lowered in intense wariness. "Dear boy, who is that Rimbaud look-alike?" one old poetaster drawled to a fellow. "Young Freud at it again" was the reply. Another witness of those early years writes (anonymously, in the Robert Miller catalogue), "He always reminded me of E. M. Forster's description of Cavafy: 'a gentleman standing at a slight angle to the universe.' "

A few years after the war, Lucian married the sculptor Jacob Epstein's daughter, Kitty Garman. According to the witness just quoted, their household included a condor with a six-foot wingspan. Not quite true. Besides owning a number of sparrow hawks, Lucian once acquired a large, vicious kestrel. "Either me or it," Kitty said, so he had to take it back on his bicycle to Palmers, a pet shop reputed to sell snakes by the yard. In his studio there was also the stuffed head of a zebra, which consoled Lucian for no longer having any horses around; horses had been a passion of his since childhood, and still are. Whether or not it was because he shared his grandfather's interest in zoology (the subject of Sigmund Freud's first research was the gonads of an eel), Lucian proceeded to do drawings of dead monkeys, one of them a gift from the *opiomane* poet Olivier Larronde, who was somewhat negligent with pets. Lucian's spiky, sharp-focus drawings, of fur, feather, and fin, were acclaimed, much to his irritation, for their naïveté. "People took an inability for an affectation," he says. The inability did not last long. Since he exercised control—over himself as well as others—as deftly as his grandfather had done, Lucian rapidly developed into the most original portraitist and figure painter of his generation, and also as a character to be reckoned with. The fact that most arbiters of contemporary art anathematized anything figurative did not for a moment deter him from his chosen course, nor did it leave him feeling any the less modern as a painter.

In the late forties and early fifties, Lucian spent some time in Paris. Sigmund Freud had had the foresight to give one of his grandson's earliest works, a sculpture of a fish, to his favorite pupil, Princess Marie Bonaparte, in the hope that she would become Lucian's patron. In due course, she did. She kept a watchful eye on Lucian, bought some drawings of his, and commissioned him to illustrate one of her books. Like many another good-looking young man of promise, he was also taken up by Marie-Laure de Noailles, who was the most munificent and manipulative of Parisian art patrons as well as the granddaughter of Laure de Sade and therefore a direct descendant of the "divine Marquis." Marie-Laure asked Lucian to accompany her on a trip to Vienna. She wanted to have a commemorative plaque put on Sigmund Freud's house and also to arrange a meeting with a relative of Sacher-Masoch. "*Du bist Masoch, er ist Freud, und ich bin Sade*," Marie-Laure announced portentously when they got together. Masoch fled. Lucian drifted off to take a look at the city he had not seen since a visit to his grandfather on the eve of the Anschluss, ten years earlier.

In Paris, he became a friend of Giacometti, Balthus, and Christian Bérard, as well as of the monkey-fancying *poète maudit* Larronde. Giacometti was something of a hero to Lucian, and Bérard a model for one of his finest early portraits. Lucian appeared to fit so naturally into the postwar avant-garde Left Bank life that some of us were afraid dismal, philistine London would lose him. But the very dinginess of England turned out to be more conducive to the practice of art. By the mid-nineteen-fifties, Lucian had settled permanently in the then-run-down, bombed-out, boarded-up neighborhood of Paddington. Since then, he has kept mostly to the British Isles. And if in the course of the nineteen-sixties English painting—not to speak of the English art world—finally lost the provincial air



"Evening in the Studio," 1993, Freud's most recent painting, will appear in a major exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum.

that had driven progressive artists to seek inspiration abroad it was largely thanks to Lucian and two other painters, both of them close friends of his: the Irish-born Francis Bacon and the German-born Frank Auerbach. The so-called London School—a concept thought up by the Ohioan R. B. Kitaj—proved to be about as English as the Paris School was French or the New York School was American.

Paddington permeates Freud's painting as deeply as Tahiti permeates Gauguin's. Whether or not it manifests itself in Lucian's imagery, the funkiness of the place, as of an unmade bed, and its slightly shabby light seep into virtually all his work and Londonize it. But then foreign-born artists—Holbein, Van Dyck, Sickert, to name the most obvious—have often captured the Englishness of the English better than native ones. Apart from Constable, the British school never impinged on Freud's

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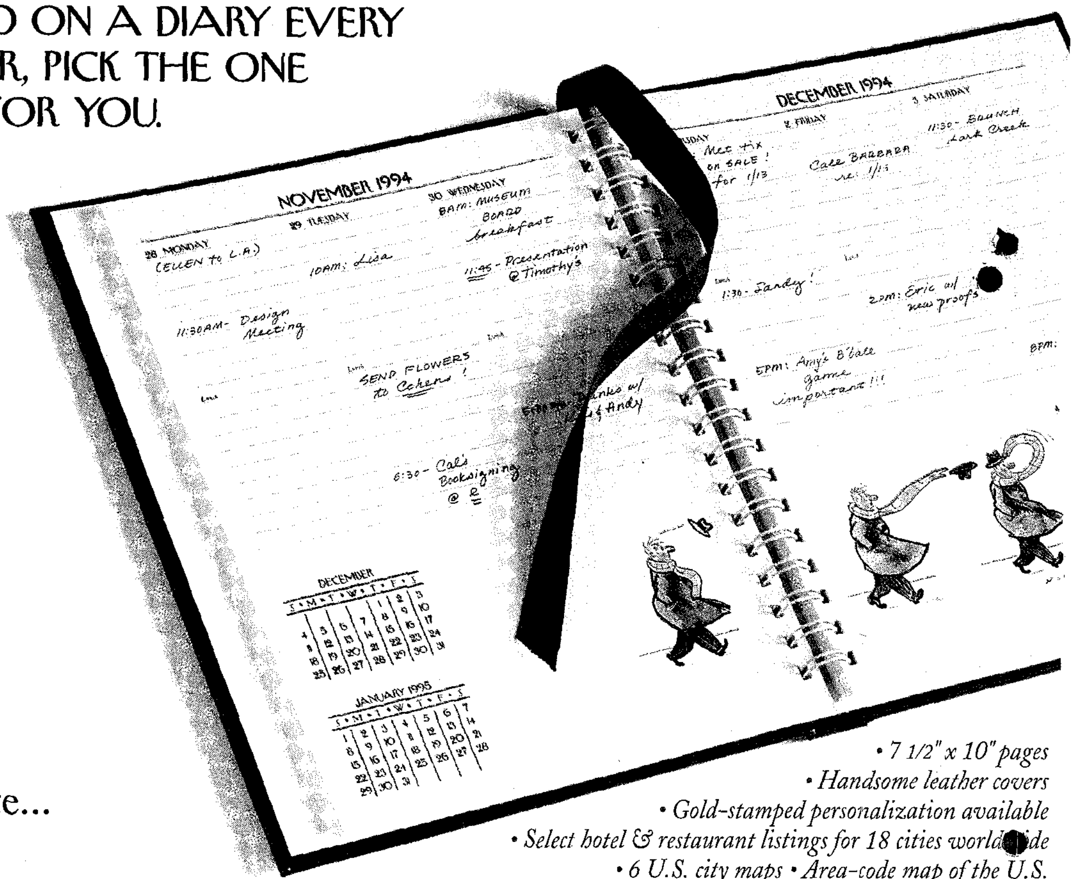
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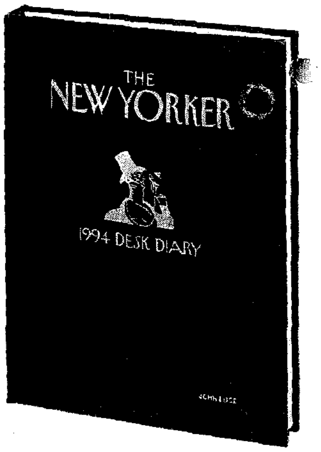
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vision. But the agility with which he managed to avoid the shadow of Picasso and Matisse is evidence of his stubbornness in protecting his style from contagious influences. Cézanne may have been "the father of us all" to Picasso and Braque but not to Freud (though he admits admiring such early Cézannes as the portrait of Achille Emperaire). Degas has been more of a mentor—especially in his later, looser drawings.

Freud's roots are, for the most part, in German art: not, he is adamant, in Expressionist melodrama or the bitter social realism of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* group, or in the Sturm und Drang of Lovis Corinth; or in the spirituality of the Nazarenes (the German equivalent of the Pre-Raphaelites), though their work has an inner intensity akin to his. No, the obsessive graphic detail and the brooding quality of his early portraits and figures stem largely from Dürer, whose watercolors of small animals, grasses, and wildflowers hung in reproduction on his parents' walls and inspired his own spikier studies of similar subjects. Freud's latest naked men and women can still be seen to descend from Dürer's "Adam and Eve." Freud also developed a passion for Ingres—for the rigor of his discipline, for the intensity of his observation and the elegance with which he imparts a mass of detailed information. To judge by the great back view of Leigh Bowery in the Metropolitan show, Freud is still beholden to this artist. Yet another mentor is Rodin. The full-length naked "Balzac" used to stand guard outside Freud's studio, and the more flagrantly naked bronze "Iris, Messenger of the Gods"—the headless torso with the splayed-apart legs—stands in the hall of his house.

Why Rodin? One has only to look at Freud's recent figures, seemingly sculptured out of paint, to realize that he, too, is intent on rendering the tensions concealed in the model's psyche as important as those at work beneath the skin. What Freud finds "exciting" about the "Balzac" is that Rodin managed to embody the writer's spirit and his prodigious creative energy as well as his physicality. Besides the above, Freud has looked long and hard at Velázquez, Rembrandt and Hals, Constable, Géricault and Courbet. Hence the increasingly *malerisch* quality of his work. However, as he says, "My method is so arduous that there has never been much room for outside influence."

It is almost impossible to write about Freud without referring to Francis Bacon. Before their friendship wore thin and finally came undone, some twenty years ago, the two painters were very close. Witness their marvellous portraits of each other. Freud, though he was thirteen years younger, was one of Bacon's earliest supporters; he acquired, or was given, a number of his paintings (including the great "Two Figures on a Bed," familiarly known as "The Buggers," which still hangs on Freud's bedroom wall) and nudged him into the limelight by finding him a gallery. Bacon, for his part, helped to transform Freud from someone who thought primarily in terms of drawing to someone who thought primarily in terms of painting. "He talked a great deal about packing a lot of things into one single brushstroke, which amused and excited me, and I realized it was a million miles away from anything I could ever do," Freud has said. (No longer. Now Freud's brushstrokes are the ones packed with observation and sensation.) At the height of their friendship, in the nineteen-fifties and sixties, Freud and Bacon were inseparable. Although the two were totally different in temperament and sexual orientation as well as artistic style, they shared certain characteristics: Baudelairean dandyism (in intellect and manner, and not only in clothes); a very cool and mordant wit; a keen ear for fine writing and an irreverent eye for fine painting; a total rejection of middle-class values in favor of very low and, on occasion, rather high life; and, not least, a passion for big-time gambling. Bacon, a former croupier, who saw each brushstroke as something of a gamble, played roulette to win. "Bacon was beautiful to watch in a casino," Freud says. "He would dash from table to table laying out stacks of chips in complicated permutations." Freud, no gambler when it came to painting, played the horses obsessively and no less ingeniously, not exactly to lose but for the aristocratic pleasure of—here he chooses his words carefully—"purging myself of superfluous cash by losing as much money as I can get hold of."

Why did their friendship peter out? "For

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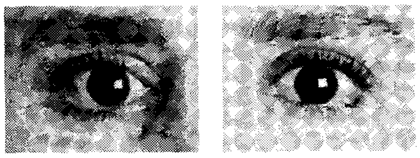
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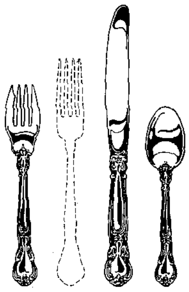

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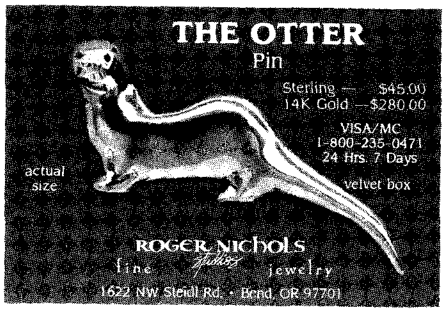
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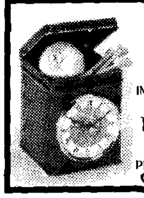
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years, Francis seldom did any bad paintings, and for years I was always telling him how good they were," Freud explains. "As his inspiration began to fail him, Francis's rigid belief in his own supremacy as an artist left me feeling unconvinced and empty. What had been the subject matter of his pictures became paraphernalia. Things were included in a painting because they had been in the previous one. With the urgency gone, some elements just seemed to be in the way, like bits of gauze left inside a patient's stomach by a forgetful surgeon." For instance, those patches of trompe-l'oeil newsprint, which Bacon repeatedly uses to camouflage inert areas; and those aleatory gobs of paint on which the artist had once gambled the fate of canvas after canvas.

As for Bacon, he denounced Freud for being too "careful." Although this was not intended as a compliment, it should, I think, be seen as one. Diligence, sensibility, and iron control—some might add an enormous ego—are at the root of Freud's mastery. It is this combination that has enabled the tortoise to end up ahead of the hares who wrote him off thirty years ago. Freud remembers the painter Richard Hamilton in the mid-sixties dismissing his art as pointless and suggesting he give it up. Freud's recent paintings return, as it were, the compliment. If he had not always chosen the long, cautious, courageous haul over tempting Baconian shortcuts, he would never have arrived at the great late period that every artist dreams of.

This late flowering is to some extent a matter of eyesight as well as of brushwork. Freud admits having a "lazy" left eye, for which his lefthandedness helps to compensate, and using glasses to read but never to paint. Like many people over the age of sixty, he probably suffers mildly from presbyopia, an inability to focus sharply on nearby objects. For an aging painter of tremendous scope and technique—one thinks of Titian, Rembrandt, and Cézanne—this refractive failing can be a blessing in disguise. Presbyopia is surely at least partly responsible for the pervasive breadth of handling and richness of *matière*, the presentation of pictorial information on a sumptuous rhetorical scale which are such distinctive features of the paintings in the Metropolitan's exhibit.

FREUD is not much given to talking about his famous grandfather, who died when he was sixteen. He claims to be fairly ignorant of psychoanalysis and to see it as "unsuited to the life span." He prefers to discuss the old man's humor and generosity and his fondness for conspiracy. This last is a trait that Lucian seems to have inherited, though not to the extent of convening a secret committee, as Sigmund Freud permitted Ernest Jones to do in 1912, with the sole purpose of shielding him and his controversial work from prying outsiders. These days, Freud could do with such a shield. The fact that so many of his recent paintings depict the women in his life—friends, his daughters, mistresses—without any clothes on has generated much prurient curiosity about his personal life. Since he is extremely fastidious about his privacy—"It matters enormously whom I see and whom I don't see," he says—he is at pains to control journalistic access to his studio and also to his family and friends. (Almost no one has his ever-changing telephone numbers or his home address; those who wish to reach him must go through his lawyer.) Unfortunately, the cordon sanitaire with which he tries to protect himself has at times proved self-defeating. Stymied by the artist's loyal coterie, in quest of a story more than one journalist has turned to disgruntled figures from the distant past—"pilfering roommates and ex-girlfriends paying off old scores," he says. The resultant fabrications might well have succeeded in demonizing the artist (Lucifer Freud!) and his work if they hadn't been so ludicrously wide of the mark.

Freud's susceptible critics have likened the nudes to victims of train wrecks, terror, or rape, and have called the painter a misogynist for portraying them that way. He is unfazed by this reaction. The women are literally—indeed, blatantly—*à poil*, and, to that extent, at our mercy, but they have not been eroticized or otherwise degraded;

even the ones lying side by side are minding their own business, not each other's. To whom do they relate? The artist, of course.

Freud acknowledges that posing is arduous and that "painting a nude deepens the transaction," and he explains, "That is why I do my best to see that my models are having a good time, lying in positions that come naturally to them, essentially being themselves. I want my models to look as unset-up as possible." As for painting his daughters in the buff, Freud is amazed at all the fuss. "What could be more natural? I paint only people who are close to me. And who closer than my children? If I had thought it odd to paint them, I would never have done so. For me, painting people naked, regardless of whether they are lovers, children, or friends, is never an erotic situation. The sitter and I are involved in making a painting, not love. These are things that people who are not painters fail to understand. Besides, there is something about a person being naked before me that invokes consideration—you could even call it chivalry—on my part: in the case of my children, a father's consideration as well as a painter's."

In this respect, Freud is particularly scornful of accusations that his well-known painting "Large Interior, Paddington"—of his eight- or nine-year-old daughter Isobel, lying under a tree in a pot on the floor of his studio—reeks of guilt and terror and sexual anxiety. Some critics have even suggested that she looks as though she has been raped. These misapprehensions, which first arose when the painting was shown at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, in 1987, have recently resurfaced. Freud points out that Isobel is posed in the fetal position—a customary position for a child who is asleep or, as here, at rest. True, she looks a bit pensive, but that is no reason to invoke angst and guilt and terror.

"Of course I hope people will be strongly affected by my pictures," Freud says. "But the *way* they affect people has more to do with the beholder than the painter. I remember reading about someone who was frightened to death by looking at an egg." Significantly, the most fierce and remorseless image in the Metropolitan's exhibition is Freud's devastating self-portrait. Imagine Dela-

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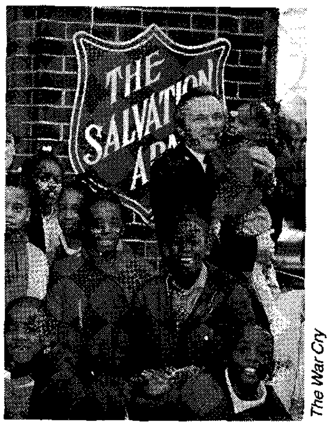

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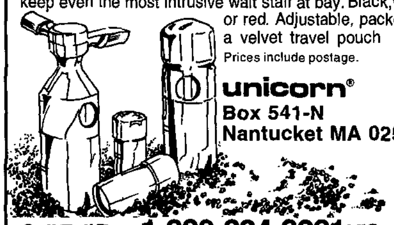

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croix's galvanic image of Paganini—only naked.

Freud has been accused not only of victimizing his sitters but of making them look old. He explains that this stems from his desire to give the maximum variety of expression and mood to the people in his portraits. "If they look old, it's probably because I allow for mobility and other eventualities." He adds that biology plays a role in his work: "It comes from my fascination with watching animals, from having worked with horses as a boy. I like people to look as natural and as physically at ease as animals, as my whippet." Not that Freud has any intention of bestializing people, as Picasso often did. Biological and psychological truth is his objective, not metamorphic manipulation. A sitter's inner feelings and reveries—and, in the case of women and, I suspect, some of Freud's gay models, the sitter's *mystery*—are as much the subject of his figure paintings as is the structure of a face or body. He simply wants to tell as much of the truth about them as he possibly can. "Aesthetic and biological truthtelling is what my painting is all about," Freud says. The only problem, his current principal model has attested, is that the "truthtelling" process can leave the model feeling very vulnerable.

"Vulnerable! Of course, a model—above all, a naked model—is going to feel vulnerable," Freud says. "The fact that a model would never find himself or herself in this particular situation were it not at the painter's behest makes for vulnerability. So does being scrutinized by me for weeks at a time—some paintings require as many as eighty hours of posing. Vulnerability would not be an issue if I used professional models. But I don't, because professional models have been stared at so much that they have grown another skin. When they take their clothes off, they are not naked; their skin has become another form of clothing."

The sheer impact of Freud's large recent paintings has as much to do with his canny manipulation of scale as with the impact of his large (six feet two and overweight) Australian model, Leigh Bowery, who has been a fixture in Freud's studio for much of the last four years. Bowery was born into the Salvation Army, in which his parents still soldier. Like several of Freud's other male models, he is homosexual. "I am drawn to them because I respect their courage," Freud says. However, I cannot help feeling that vulnerability is a large part of their appeal for him. "An unusually big heifer carting around sixteen or seventeen stones" is how Bowery has described himself. By profession, he is a performance artist—an exhibitionistic dancer who transforms himself into weird pieces of human sculpture. Sometimes Bowery performs naked (except for body jewelry and a merkin), but more often he squeezes his considerable bulk into fantastically inventive costumes that he has designed and made himself: works of art in their own right, which carry transvestite kink to new heights—some might say depths—of surreal subversion.

For an appearance at the Wigstock drag festival in downtown New York on Labor Day, Bowery wore a foam mask and a preposterous tailleur of puce and violet checks—a sumo wrestler impersonating Dame Edna. When he had finished singing, he lay back on a table and went into labor. From his skirt there appeared to emerge a squirming pink caul. It contained a very thin, very naked girl—Bowery's partner, Nicola Bateman, covered with blood and attached to him by an umbilical cord.

Those two, the man-mountain and the whippet-thin girl, are the subjects of what is to my mind Freud's masterpiece, "And the Bridegroom." Bowery and Nicola lie naked on a bed, turning away from one another ambivalently in what could be taken—or more likely mistaken—for postcoital repose. Compared with the other large paintings in which Bowery figures, this one seems actually lyrical—less genitally obtrusive, and leavened by the presence of the girl. The figures are smaller—farther from us than usual—and are suspended in vast, light-filled space. Freud has taken the title from A. E. Housman's "A Shropshire Lad." It enhances rather than elucidates the painting's mystery:

> Lovers lying two and two
> Ask not whom they sleep beside,
> And the bridegroom all night through
> Never turns him to the bride.

"Leigh's wonderfully buoyant bulk was an instrument I felt I could use in my painting," Freud says. "Especially those extraordinary dancer's legs. After seeing him perform, I asked him to pose. When he stripped for me, I told him to leave the nipple rings in if he felt too naked without them, but out they came, and they have not reappeared." The only trace in the paintings of the performance artist is a pair of barely visible plugs in Bowery's dimples, which prevent the holes drilled in his cheeks (to take safety pins and other punkish embellishments) from healing over. And then, as the paintings reveal, Bowery is obliged to keep his head and his entire body shaved, to facilitate "body modifications." Since shaving enhances this huge man's vulnerability, I doubt if Freud would want the hair to grow back.

"I think of Leigh's chubbiness as generosity rather than bulk," Freud says. "He's a remarkable model, because he's so intelligent, instinctive, and inventive, also amazingly perverse and abandoned. Because he is a performer, he instinctively knows how to edit himself, instinctively knows what I want to see." If Freud has seen just how to harness Bowery's exhibitionism to his own painterly needs, he has the streak of exhibitionism in himself to thank. Inevitably, paint transcends kink, however artful. Inevitably, the life-size, bare-ass Bowerys that Freud re-creates in paint—paint that does not simulate flesh so much as turn into it—have a more profound, more existential impact than the man himself achieves in full fig onstage.

Back, however, to Velázquez. Just as the great Spaniard redeems "Evening in the Studio" from the bawdiness of Donald McGill, he can be said to redeem the three monumental nudes of Leigh Bowery—the cynosure of the Met's show—from the air of exhibitionism that the prominence and painterliness of the sitter's genitalia underscore. Once one sees these paintings in the light of Velázquez's great seated "Mars" in the Prado, their qualities are even more impressive. "Mars" turns out to be one of Lucian's favorite paintings. "I love his sadness and jokiness and the pointlessness of his strength," he says. "He's no god of war. He's a movie extra who just might get a walk-on part as Mars." Isn't that how Freud sees Leigh Bowery? ♦

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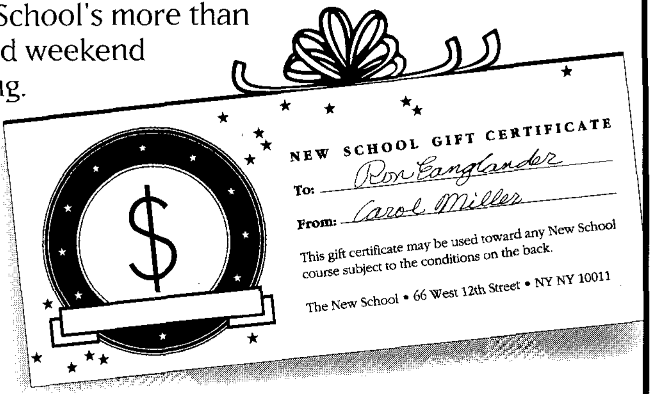

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SHOUTS AND MURMURS

PAPAL INFALLIBILITY EXAMINED

BY FRANK GANNON

THE POPE is infallible—that's what you hear all the time. However, it's not always true, and Catholics aren't really expected to believe it. The Pope, John Paul II, is infallible when he's speaking ex cathedra; otherwise, he's a very fallible person. I know this for two reasons: (1) I'm a Catholic. (2) I was working a blackjack table in Atlantic City last summer when the Pope came in and dropped some major cash.

It was about midnight. The place was packed and I was busy as hell. I saw Henry, my pit boss, and I could see he wanted to talk to me. I couldn't imagine why. I was running the twenty-five-dollar table and everybody who had played looked like they'd just got off a bus. Some guy had won maybe a couple of hundred bucks. There was nothing unusual at my table that night.

Henry got my ear. "We have a V.I.P. coming in. We're going to get some more security and close the tables around yours."

This had never happened to me before. You're not going to see Pat Sajak at a twenty-five-dollar table.

"We're going to make your table the thousand-dollar game," Henry said.

That was fine with me, but I had a question. "Why my table?"

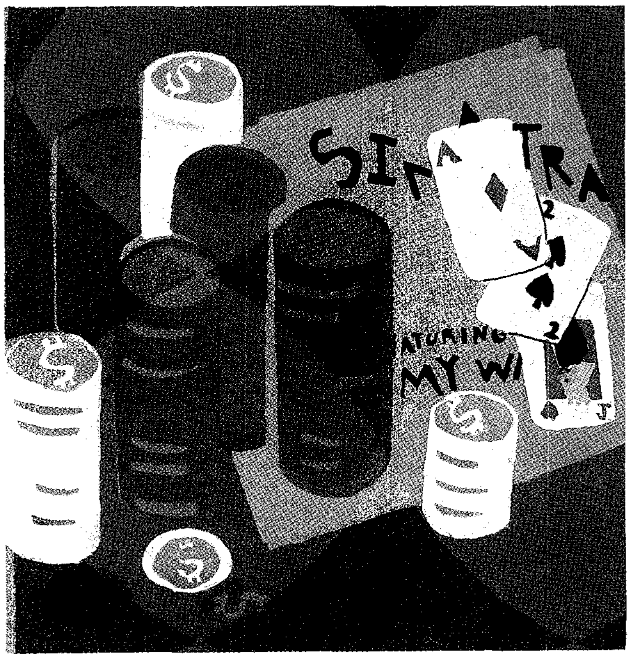
"He specified you."

"He knows me?" I couldn't think of anybody famous that I knew.

"No. He doesn't know you. He just asked for a Catholic and you're the only one on this shift."

"Let's do it," I said.

Henry went to the door and talked to a little guy who looked like he was from Switzerland. They go outside for a minute, and when they come back there are four other Swiss guys with them, but these are big Swiss men. Each of them takes a corner of my table. They do this very subtly, so as not to cause any alarm. The Swiss are masters of this.



Henry empties the tables around mine. Now people are starting to buzz because they know something is up. I hear a couple of people in the crowd whispering "Sinatra."

Then the door opens and Pope John Paul II comes walking into Park Place. It takes a second for me to recognize him because he's not dressed the usual way. He's got a tan blazer on over a T-shirt, chinos, and some Nikes without laces. He's wearing some prescription shades. I look in his eyes and I can tell that he's serious and he wants to gamble.

In each casino, the house rules are set: I have to hit sixteen; I have to stand on seventeen. The Pope, of course, got to play the way he wanted. With aces and high cards, he always split and doubled down. He never hit an eighteen, no matter what my upcard was. He would hit seventeen if I had an ace. As far as Henry (who was watching through a one-way mirror in the ceiling) and I could tell, the Pope didn't count cards.

Around one-thirty, when the Pope had just lost three or four hands in a row, he asked for a break and some new decks. I was only too happy to oblige. The Pope was a fast, intense, scrupulous player, and I felt that I could use the downtime. During our break, I got in a little small talk. I asked what his favorite Sinatra singles would be. He thought for a minute. Then he wrote something down on the back of an envelope and handed it to me:

1. "You Make Me Feel So Young"
2. "It Was a Very Good Year"
3. "Pennies from Heaven"
4. "My Way"
5. "I've Got You Under My Skin"

Right away, I think, Get serious—"*My Way*"? But I don't say anything. This is an infallible person I'm talking to here. Besides, the customer is always right, especially when he's playing a thousand-dollar game.

He had a little winning streak around two, but at quarter to three he was down just over thirty-five grand. He looked over at one of the Swiss guys and I could tell that the evening was done. They left in a very professional manner.

What do I think? I think he's a gentleman and a professional, and if people want to think he's infallible that's fine with me. If some people like "My Way," then that's their business. I just work here. ♦

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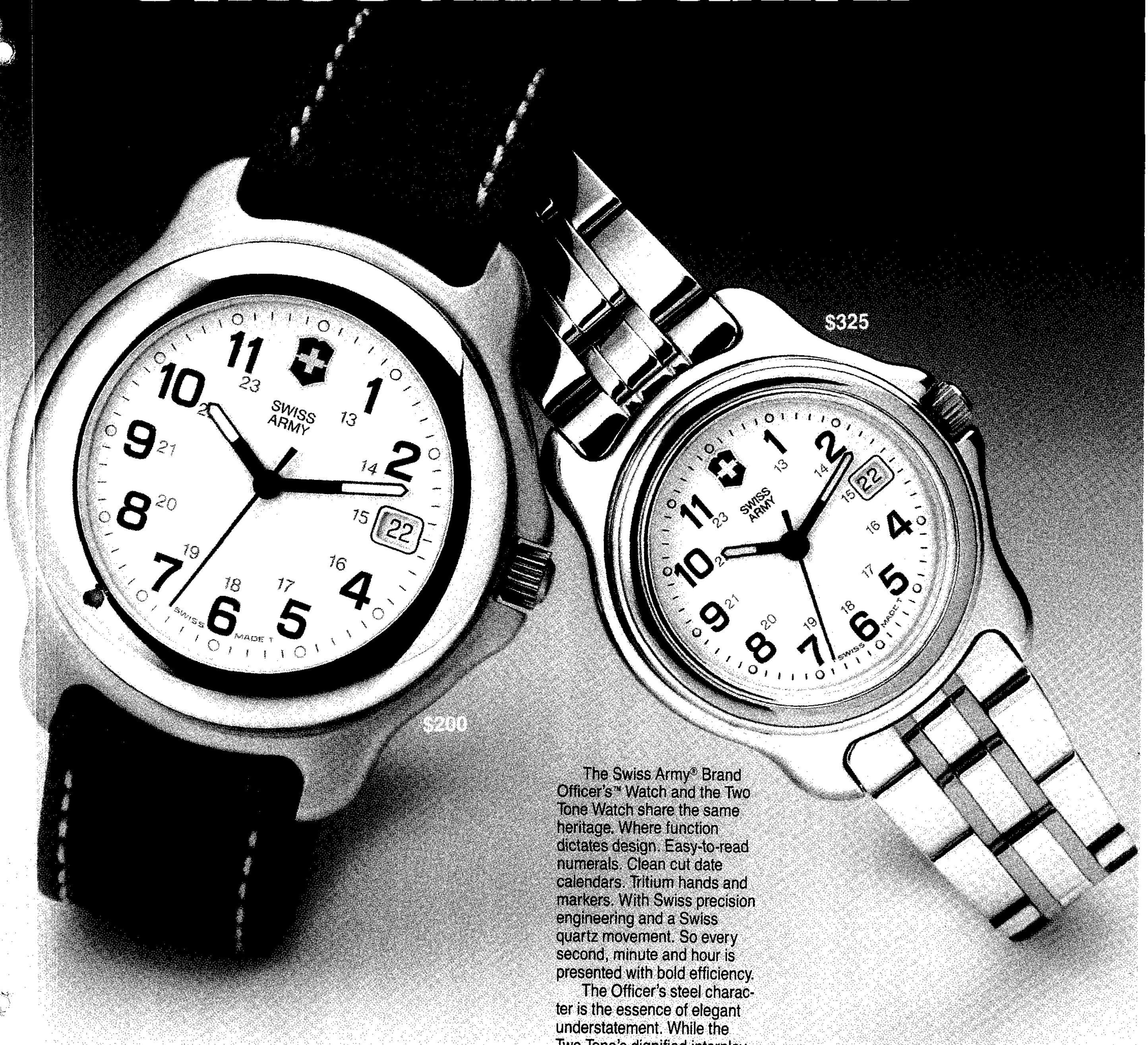

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